

Empower Educators

Resources & strategies for educators who have students who are the target of bullying, who want to help a friend who has been bullied, or who have engaged in bullying behavior



How to respond when your student has been the target of bullying.

If you found out your student was the target of online bullying behaviors OR if your student reaches out to you and asks for help about an online bullying situation, what would you say or do?

Safety first! Make sure the target, the perpetrators, and bystanders are safe. Once safety has been established separate conversations with all parties can begin. Always consult and follow your school's policy. You can also refer to the Facebook Parent & Teen resources for more information.

Ideally, your school has adopted an evidence-based approach to social and emotional learning (SEL) so that students are developing the necessary life skills of self-awareness, self-regulation, responsible decision making, empathy, and conflict resolution. If not, addressing a bullying incident is a good time to explore bringing a social and emotional learning program to your school. In 2015 for instance Facebook and Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence launched Inspired in the U.S.

Prevention Policy: The emotional climate of a school and its classrooms influence the community's well-being and students' ability to learn. By building a school wide bullying prevention policy and teaching emotional intelligence skills to your students, you can help to prevent mean and cruel behavior in the first place. One social and emotional learning program, RULER, has students and their teachers create an Emotional Intelligence Charter - a collaborative document that helps to establish a supportive and productive learning



© Facebook 2016

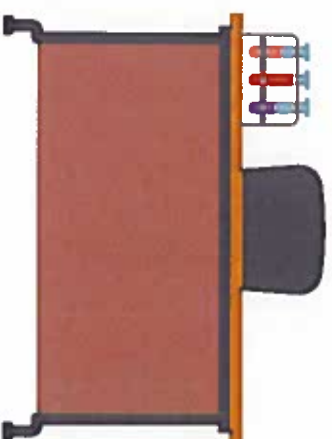
Reporting: It's also important to set up a clear system for reporting. Do you have an anonymous reporting box? Let students know when and how to report issues of bullying.

Bullying, or mean behavior, comes in many forms including someone saying mean things, spreading rumors, posting an

inappropriate photo or video, someone not leaving someone else alone, or someone making threatening remarks. It is aggressive behavior that is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power. The imbalance can be the social status, age, or even physical size of the perpetrator

The first step to helping your student is to be a good listener and talk through the problem without interruption.

Let students know when and where your conversation is going to take place. Here, we provide some tips and strategies to help you have an initial, successful conversation for some of most frequently reported problems of bullying.



step | one

Set yourself up for a successful conversation with your student.

1. Take your student seriously. If your student wants to talk to you about a bullying situation or something that happened that made them upset, take it seriously. Make sure you find a time to talk with the student that same day. If you are unable at the time you heard about the incident, your ability to listen to your student and understand their feelings and experiences means everything to your student. It is a basic human need to be heard and understood. Your student has come to you as a trusted adult to listen and help them solve a problem they are having.
2. Find the best time and place to have the conversation. Find a private place to talk with your student so you will both be comfortable and your student will feel safe to talk freely.
3. Before you talk to your student, check in with your own feelings. Empathize with your student. Recognize strong emotions you may have about the situation, and, most importantly, manage them before you talk with your child. Taking a deep breath, using positive "self-talk," like saying to yourself, "I want the best for my student, so I will remain calm when we talk," can help you get into the right mindset so the conversation stays positive. Imagine how you would feel if the situation had happened to you.
4. Remember, you are the role model. Your student is learning the best and worst ways to respond to challenging situations from you. Feelings are contagious. By staying calm, your student will more likely be calm and learn how to deal with challenging situations. If you notice you are upset and not sure you can be calm, hold off until you feel ready to have the conversation.

Step | two

Talk with your student about the problem. The first step to helping your student is to be a good listener and talk through the situation.

1. Give your student unconditional support. No matter what has happened, let your student know you will listen to them. Allow your student to get out the full story without interrupting or criticizing them. Your student needs to feel emotionally safe in order to be open and honest with you. Reassure your student that you will help them try to resolve the problem.
 - Find out whether the student has told their parents. If not, ask why they haven't told them. Ask the student if they would like to tell them together.
2. Use gentle exploration and empathy. Often kids who are targets of bullying or other mean behavior have a hard time talking about it. Our sample conversation starters will help you to find out what happened, how your student feels about it, and what they might want to do. Be sure to tell your student that the reason you are asking questions is because you need all the facts so that you can help them best solve the problem.
 - If the incident happened on Facebook, ask the student to bring in a screen shot of the post or photo so you can look at it together and also record the incident.

Some key points to guide your initial conversation:

- Be a good listener; avoid putting words into your student's mouth or jumping to conclusions.
- Use a calm and steady voice throughout the conversation.
- Avoid using harsh or accusatory language, which can result in your student either shutting down or becoming more upset.
- Avoid being judgmental or critical about what behavior they were engaged in before the incident.
- Avoid comments like, "I thought I told you not to be friends with Jagger's name!" or "Let's not make a big deal about this - bullying is just a stage every kid goes through."
- Avoid blaming your student for being the target of bullying. Assure them that their bullying experience was not their fault.
- Avoid giving advice based on the way you feel about the incident.
- Never encourage the student to "fight back" against the child who is bullying. That could result in the target getting in trouble, suspended, or expelled from school.
- Avoid making promises you can't keep, but do reassure your student that you want to help find a successful resolution to the problem, and that you will do your best to make sure their life doesn't get more difficult. You should avoid talking about what will happen to the bully, as well.
- Every report deserves an empathic conversation whether or not it falls into the category of bullying. Nevertheless, it will be helpful for your student to understand the difference between rude, mean, and bullying behaviors.
 - Rude behavior is when someone says or does something in a rough or harsh way, usually by mistake, that hurts someone's feelings. Some examples are saying something harsh about a friend or dismissing someone.
 - Mean behavior is saying or doing something to purposely hurt someone once or maybe twice; some examples are: twisting the facts, blaming someone else when it is your wrongdoing (psychological manipulation), calling names or other put downs, insulting someone's family or anything about them.
 - Bullying behavior is aggressive behavior that is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power. Imbalance can be the social status, age, or even physical size of the perpetrator.
- As most educators know, rude and mean behaviors can be very hurtful, but are generally handled differently than bullying. Rude and mean behaviors may be handled directly by classroom teachers, with or without the help of school counselors. Of course, all conflicts need to be addressed, but in most schools only bullying behaviors, i.e. those that intend to harm a child are reported and governed by school policy.

Check out our Conversation Starters:

- "Student's Name!, I'm so sorry this happened to you, and I'm glad you told me. Can you tell me more about what happened? Is this the first time or has this happened before?" And, most importantly, "How are you feeling?"
- "Student's Name!, that sounds upsetting. I can understand why you are feeling angry, afraid, sad, embarrassed. Let's go find a quiet place so we can talk privately."
- "Student's Name!, I'm so glad you told me. You did the right thing - I promise I will do my best to help you manage this."
- "Student's Name!, Bullying is not ok. I know it's difficult for you to talk about it. I really want to help you figure out what to do."

If your student is being threatened you might say something like the following, but always consult school policies:

- "Student's Name!, It's never ok for someone to threaten you. I'm really glad you came to me. Let's talk through this with XYZ so we can make sure you are safe, and that you feel safe too and get the best possible help."

If your student doesn't want to do anything about it:

- Your student might not want to do anything because they are afraid of losing a friendship, escalating the situation, being bullied again, or are uncomfortable expressing themselves. Some kids don't want to be seen as a "tattle tale" and are afraid of getting someone in trouble. It's important to know if that is the reason your student does not want to do anything. Then, you can explain the difference between "tattling" and "telling and reporting." Tattling is about getting someone in trouble - usually when something is not dangerous. Telling someone that you have been bullied isn't tattling. It's getting the necessary help you need to stop the bullying behavior and to ensure your own and others' safety."

3. Thoroughly investigate the incident, abiding by school's policy. Make sure you understand fully what happened by having separate conversations with all parties, including the target, the person accused of bullying, and any witnesses, interviewing the person accused of bullying and target together, however, may cause additional stress for the target.

- Consult others at your school (e.g., social worker, psychologist, dean, principal) and/or your school's policy about what to do next about both reporting and handling the incident.
- Provide on-going interventional support for all parties involved.
- Appoint a point person to check back on both the target and aggressor until certain that the situation is resolved.



step | three

Work with your student on an action plan. Your action plan should follow your school's policy and be done in consultation with the school principal in addition to the school psychologist, social worker or counselor, if necessary.

1. Based on what you learned from exploring the situation — whether the behavior is classified as bullying or mean behavior — decide on the appropriate action that aligns with your school's policy.
 - If the incident warrants reporting, remind your student about your school's policies and do what ever is necessary to ensure all students are safe and getting their needs met.
 - If there is any reason to believe the student is in danger, report the incident immediately to an authority figure in your school. Make sure the student who was the target of bullying is safe until the situation has been handled by the authorities.
 - If appropriate, you can facilitate a conversation or a mediation session where the perpetrator apologizes to the target.
2. If you and your student agree — after consulting your school's policy — that the incident is not too serious and does not need to be reported, you can work on an action plan with your student. For example, if the student is upset that they were not invited to a party, you can do your best to comfort the student, but the student should know that there likely won't be any consequences for the student they said was bullying them by leaving them out of the party.

3. If the bullying has moved online let your student know actions are available on Facebook.

Show your student what is available on Facebook:

(You can let your students know about Facebook's social reporting tools choose to do one or more of the following.)

- Use the "Report" link. Facebook will review the post or photo and if it violates Facebook terms, it will be removed (Private: Person who wrote the post or uploaded the photo is alerted that it has been taken down, but is not told who alerted Facebook to the violation.)
- Contact the person directly, either on or off Facebook, but only if you feel it is safe and comfortable to do so. (Private: This message will only be viewed by yourself and the person you are reaching out to.)



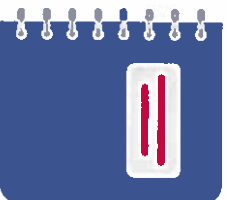
- Get help from a trusted friend or adult, either on or off Facebook so you are supported in how to handle the situation. You can share the post with them confidentially. (Private between you and the person you have messaged.)
- Unfriend the person by adjusting your privacy settings. The person is removed from your "Friends" list and you won't be able to see each other's News Feeds. If your privacy setting is "public," it may still be possible to see their content, and they may be able to see your content. (Person is not alerted that they have been "unfriended" but if they attempt to visit your profile, it will be clear that you are no longer connected.)
- Block the person. The person cannot start a conversation with you, or see your posts. (Person will not be alerted that they have been blocked, but you will no longer be able to find each other's profiles through search.)

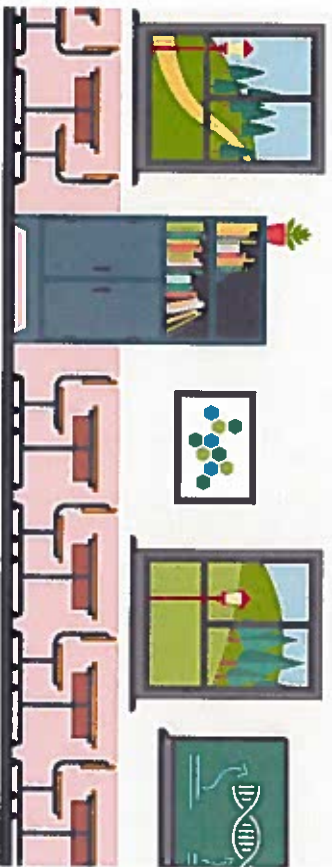
Show your student Facebook's new anti-bullying hub where she/he can get more information and learn some strategies and words that might be helpful in managing the bullying situation.

step | four

Follow up with your student to ensure they feel both physically and emotionally safe in your classroom. Here are some questions for you to consider to maintain the safety of a student who was bullied, and to create a healthy school climate.

1. Has it been resolved? Does your student feel that the situation she/he came to you with, has been resolved. Does your student need more help or guidance? It's critical to check-in with the student regularly about how their relationship is with the student who engaged in the bullying behavior.
2. Does the student feel comfortable in your classroom and at school? How often does this student have to interact with the student who bullied them? Can that be adjusted?
3. Has the child who engaged in bullying behavior received support?
4. Are the students involved in the incident in need of mental health support or services, in your opinion — like your school counselor, or an outside referral?
5. Does your student have a support network of friends and family? Have you encouraged the student to reach out to people she/he trusts?
6. Have you developed norms around acceptable behaviors in your classroom?
7. Are you teaching direct lessons on social and emotional learning, particularly on how emotions and actions impact relationships? How are you concretely promoting positive relationships in your classroom (e.g., do you encourage morning greetings, questions about well-being, compliments)? Are you teaching children conflict resolution skills?





How to respond when your student have been the perpetrator of bullying behaviors.

If you find out your student was the perpetrator of bullying behaviors, what would you say or do?

Safety first! Make sure the target, the perpetrators, and bystanders are safe. Once safety has been established, separate conversations with all parties can begin. School policies must be followed.

Ideally, your school has adopted an evidence-based approach to social and emotional learning so that students are developing the necessary life skills of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and conflict resolution. If not, addressing a bullying incident is a good time to explore bringing a social and emotional learning program to your school.

It's also important to set up a clear system for reporting. Let the students know when and how to report issues of bullying. Do you have a reporting box? Can reports be anonymous? Let students know when and where your conversation is going to take place.

Here, we provide tips and strategies to help you have an initial, successful conversation for some of most frequent forms of bullying. Bullying comes in many forms, which can take place at home, school or online, including someone saying mean things, spreading rumors, posting an inappropriate photo or video, someone not leaving someone else alone, or someone making threatening remarks. When helping your student, before taking action, it is important to be a good listener and talk through the problem. You can also refer to the Bullying Prevention Hub's Parents and Teen resources for more information.

step | one

Set yourself up for a successful conversation with your student.

1. **Take your student seriously.** If your student wants to talk to you about a bullying situation, take it seriously. Make sure you find a time to talk with the student that same day. If you are unable at the time you heard about the incident, your ability to listen to your student and understand their feelings and experiences means everything to your student. It is a basic human need to be heard and understood.

2. **Find the best time and place to have the conversation.** Find a private place to talk with your student so you will both be comfortable and your student will feel safe to talk freely.

3. **Before you talk to your student, check in with your own feelings.** This includes recognizing the strong emotions you may have about the situation, and, most importantly, managing them before you talk with your child. Taking a deep breath, using positive "self-talk," like saying to yourself, "I want the best for my student so I will remain calm when we talk" or "I need to make clear decisions, and I need to calm down in order to best do that" can help you get into the right mindset so that the conversation stays positive. Even one word, or brief phrases can be effective: "breathe, calm", "calm, ease", And - put yourself in your kids shoes: imagine how you would feel if the situation had happened to you.

- If you are having strong emotions and feel like you might say something to your student that puts down their character or something else you might regret in your role as teacher, pause and avoid responding until you are calmer. If you do respond in an emotion-driven way and you do regret what you said to your student, it's important to remember that everyone makes mistakes. This challenging moment presents an opportunity to help your student develop empathy, learn how to apologize with authenticity, and learn healthier ways to treat others.

4. **Remember, you are the role model.** Your student is learning about the best and worst ways to respond to challenging situations - like bullying - from watching you. Remember, your student is watching you and how you respond - how you respond to a difficult moment may be etched in your student's mind for years. Your feelings are contagious. If you stay calm, your students will more likely be calm and learn how to deal with challenging situations effectively. If you notice you are still upset and not sure you can stay calm while talking to your student, hold off until you feel ready to have the conversation.



step | two

Talk with your student about the problem. The first step to helping your student is to be a good listener and talk through the situation.

1. Give your student support. No matter what has happened, let your student know you will listen to them. Allow your student to get out the full story without interrupting or criticizing them. Your student needs to feel emotionally safe in order to be open and honest with you. Reassure your student that you will help them try to resolve the problem.
 - You likely will have judgments about what happened, especially if your student disappointed you with their mean behavior. However, it is important for you not to express those judgments in a critical way. Try your best not to say things like, "What's wrong with you?" Rather, say something like "I am disappointed that this happened. This is serious - it is not ok for you or anyone else to spread rumors/say mean things/threaten, etc."
2. Find out what happened. Find out exactly what happened, how long it has been happening, and if anything has happened after it has been reported. Your background knowledge of your student's relationship with the child who was bullied, could influence how you discuss and handle the situation.

Some key points to guide your initial conversation include:

 - Be a good listener, don't put words into your student's mouth or jump to conclusions. Be careful about giving advice based on the way YOU feel about the incident - it may be very different than what your student feels.
 - Use a calm and steady voice throughout the conversation. Avoid using harsh or accusatory language, which can result in your student either shutting down or becoming more aggressive.
 - Avoid being judgmental or critical about what behavior they were engaged in before the bullying incident. (This doesn't mean that you give up your own assessment that the behavior was wrong.)
 - Calmly let your student know that even if it's a first time offense, bullying is unacceptable and consequences may be severe.
 - Avoid making promises you can't keep, but do reassure your student that you want to help find a successful resolution to the problem, and that you will do your best to make sure their school life doesn't get more difficult.
3. Communicate your school's values and policies. Let your student know that bullying behavior is unacceptable and that there will be consequences. Remind your student of key values like kindness, respect, and empathy. Why they are important in every community and how it is each individual's responsibility to behave in a way that reflects these values.

Use these conversation starters if you find out from someone else that your student has been engaging in bullying behavior.

 - "Student's Name, tell me about what's been happening between you and X."

If no response, then state the following: "If you have a copy of the post or photo, it's best to bring it with you"

 - "Student's Name, I heard that you have been saying mean things/posted this about X. I'm very disappointed to hear this. It's not ok to intentionally hurt someone else and you must stop immediately. Tell me exactly what happened so we can figure out the best way to handle this."

Use these conversation starters if your student discloses to you that they have been engaging in bullying behavior:

 - "Student's Name, I took courage for you to tell me this when you know how upsetting it would be for me to hear it and when you know that there will be consequences. It's never ok to say mean things/spread rumors/etc. Let's sit down and talk through the situation so we can figure out the best way to handle this."

If you find out the situation involved psychological harm or physical threats to another person:

You will want to take immediate action after hearing your student's side of the story because everyone's safety is priority. For incidents that involve a threat to someone's physical safety, sexual harassment, discrimination or an offensive image or recording, the conversation starter below can help you begin the longer discussion with the student who posted the offending upsetting message or photo

4. Thoroughly investigate the incident, abiding by school's policy. Make sure you understand fully what happened by having separate conversations with all parties, including the student who engaged in the threatening/disrespectful behavior, the target, and any witnesses.
 - Avoid bringing the target and 'perpetrator' together so that the target does not experience additional stress (Of course, if the target asks to talk directly to the 'perpetrator', consider bringing them together with the help of a school counselor.)
 - Consult others at your school (e.g., social worker, psychologist, Dean, principal) and/or your school's policy about what to do next about both reporting and handling the incident.
5. Stay firm. If your student begs you not to do anything or does not want to do anything, let them know that their behavior is not acceptable and that there will be consequences. Let them know that these consequences were created to value and protect everyone in the school community. It is critical that you follow through with whatever consequences were set depending on the severity of the incident.



step | three

Create a plan with your student to take responsible action. Your action plan should follow your school's policy and be done in consultation with the school principal in addition to the school psychologist, social worker or counselor, if necessary.

1. Based on what you learned from exploring the situation, decide on an action that aligns with your school's policy.
 - If you determine that the incident does not require reporting, work with your student on the best way they can apologize. Decide whether your student can do it alone, or if they need your guidance to write the language for an authentic, meaningful apology. Also, if appropriate, and you are trained to do so, facilitate a conversation or a mediation session where you and the perpetrator come to a decision about a type of restorative justice action to make amends with the target. This does not have to involve contact between the target and the perpetrator.
 - If relevant, show your student how to take down the post down using the Facebook Reporting System.
 - If the incident requires reporting do whatever is necessary to ensure all parties are safe and getting their needs met. Involve parents according to your school's policy. You also can recommend the Facebook Family Safety Center to families for some helpful tips.
2. Be clear about the consequences and follow through. If the behavior violates school policy, ensure consequences are aligned with the policy, including family involvement. If the behavior does not violate school policy, ideally you have classroom expectations for the way students treat each other, and will establish consequences in line with those expectations.



step | four

Follow up with your student to ensure they are safe, and feel safe, in your classroom. Here are some questions for you to consider in order to maintain the safety of a student who was bullied and to create a healthy school climate.

1. Has it been resolved? Does your student need more help or guidance? It's critical to check-in with the student regularly about how their relationship is with the student who was targeted in the bullying behavior.
2. Does the student feel comfortable in your classroom and at school? How often does this student have to interact with the other student who was involved? Can that be adjusted?
3. Has the child who engaged in bullying behavior received education and support? It is important that the student engaging in bullying behavior, learn that there is another perspective, that of the target. This will begin to develop empathy.
4. Are the students involved in the incident in need of mental health support or services, in your opinion – like your school counselor, or an outside referral?
5. Does your student have a support network of friends and family? Have you encouraged the student to reach out to people she/he trusts?
6. Have you developed norms around acceptable behaviors in your classroom and in the school community? Do you have a "Charter" that guides how students want to feel and what they will do to have those feelings each day? Do your students know about school policies and the consequences for violating them?
7. Are you teaching direct lessons on social and emotional learning, particularly on how emotions and actions impact relationships? How are you concretely promoting positive relationships in your classroom (for example, do you encourage morning greetings, questions about well being, compliments)? Are you teaching children conflict resolution skills?

Use these phone conversation starters if your student has been the target of bullying and you need to speak with their parent.

- "Hello (Mr./Mrs. parent's name), first, your daughter/son is fine! Are you free to talk for a few minutes now? I am calling to let you know of a conflict that she/he was a part of. Daughter/son has reported that his classmate/schoolmate was unkind and disrespectful to her/him – in fact, she/he is feeling bullied by this student. I know that this is upsetting to hear. Please know that our highest

priority is the safety and well being of your daughter/son and all our students. We have a no tolerance policy against bullying behavior and other kinds of disrespect in our school. I would like to tell you all the specifics and talk about how we, together, can best help (student's name). It's preferable to talk about this in person – can you come in in the next few days? In the meantime, I want to reassure you that we will follow the school guidelines for managing this conflict and we will do everything we can to help (student's name) to feel safe and cared for by the school community."

Then, when the parent comes in, repeat that your priority is the safety and well-being of all children. Tell the parent what their child reported and what other information you have about what actually happened. Of course, do not reveal personal information about the child who exhibited the bullying behavior. Assure the parent that you have spoken to their child, and will continue to talk (student's name) to be sure she/he feels safe – and, to be sure that the situation is resolved. Beyond that, you will check in with your child on a regular basis so that he knows you are there supporting her/him.

When appropriate, please add: "While we want all students, your child included to feel supported, there is a no tolerance policy in our school, with specific consequences for bullying behavior. I would like to talk to you in person about what happened and how we, together, can best help (student's name). Can you find a time to come in in the next few days? In the meantime, I want to reassure you that we will follow the school

Use these phone conversation starters if your student has been a perpetrator of bullying and you need to speak with their parent.

- "Hello (Mr./Mrs. parent's name), first, your daughter/son is fine! Are you free to talk for a few minutes now? I am calling to let you know of a conflict that she/he was a part of. I have learned from (student's name) that your daughter/son engaged in hurtful behavior. In fact, the student reported being bullied by your daughter/son. I can imagine that this is upsetting to hear. We can talk about the specifics of the situation later, but, we want you to know that our highest priority is the safety and well-being of all our students. We want to work with you to develop a pro-social plan for your daughter/son to support them in less aggressive behaviors."

When appropriate, please add: "While we want all students, your child included to feel supported, there is a no tolerance policy in our school, with specific consequences for bullying behavior. I would like to talk to you in person about what happened and how we, together, can best help (student's name). Can you find a time to come in in the next few days? In the meantime, I want to reassure you that we will follow the school

guidelines for managing this conflict and we will do everything we can to help (student's name) feel safe and supported in the school community. We care about his well being and want to understand both what triggers this behavior for (student's name) and what we can do together to prevent him from engaging with other students like this, in the future."

Then – when the parent comes in, repeat that your priority is the safety and well being of all children. Tell the parent what their child is accused of/ was seen doing and any other information you have about what actually happened. Of course, do not reveal personal information about the target – except to say that the child was very upset. Assure the parent that you have spoken to their child, and will continue to talk (student's name) to be sure he understands that he/his behavior that she/he can make different choices, more pro-social choices, in the future. Do your best to be sure that the student understands that while there may be consequences for his behavior according to the school policy – her/his well being matters to us and we want to help him make more pro-social choices in the future.

step | five

Follow up with your student's Parent, to ensure communications were clear and that everyone is on the same page about what to do to encourage the most positive outcome, here are some things you can discuss with your student's parents.

For the parent of the target:

- Check in weekly for the next month or two months to share observations about the student and how he is managing post – conflict – and, to ask if there are additional ways that you can support the student.
- Agree to look for opportunities in the school community and at home, on TV or the news, to discuss the reality that bullying behavior is unacceptable.
- If necessary suggest to the parent that he/she seek professional help for the student.

For the parent of the child engaged in bullying behavior:

- Check in weekly for the next month or two months to share observations about the student and how he is managing post – conflict – and, to ask if there are additional ways that you can support the student.
- Agree to look for opportunities in the school community and at home, on TV or the news, to discuss the reality that bullying behavior is unacceptable.
- Work with the parent to set up a plan help the student learn more about pro-social choices and empathy.
- If necessary suggest to the parent that he/she seek professional help for the student.



Bullying Prevention

Check out the important tips below to help prevent or respond to bullying in your community.



1 Build and sustain a school climate focused on the respect & integrity of others.

- Empower students who witness online bullying to step up and tell a trusted adult.
- Invite students to be the 'experts' for peer mentoring to promote positive online interactions.
- Reinforce positive messaging in the classroom and with signage posted in the computer lab or each computer station.
- Create an environment where bullying of any kind isn't "cool." Make it clear to students, parents and staff that these behaviors are unacceptable and will be disciplined.
- Look for opportunities to teach/talk to students about bullying – for example: in literature, during recess.
- Remind students regularly to ask for help if they are dealing with an issue related to bullying or safety.
- Let them know they can trust you, that you will listen to their concerns about online bullying and will take them seriously. You will do something about the problem and help get it resolved.
- "Talk to me if you or someone you know is being electronically harassed or threatened! Online bullying is wrong and unacceptable and I will help you resolve the situation. I care about your online experience and can help!"

– Let students know that your school has policies created to protect everyone's physical and emotional well-being. These policies have specific consequences for dealing with bullying and disrespectful behavior online.

2 Establish an effective safety school policy.

- Consult with your school attorney BEFORE incidents occur to find out appropriate actions to take.
- Make sure you understand what you can be held civilly liable for negligently preventing or improperly responding to bullying.
- Establish procedures that ensure the safety and protection of the targeted student.
- Clearly define bullying, harassment & intimidation
- Have an anonymous reporting system to allow students and teachers to report instances of bullying without fear of reprisal.
- Develop a formal procedure for investigating incidents of bullying.
- Develop a continuum of disciplinary consequences for bullying incidents, both at school and online. Let student know the consequences.
- School internet technology should include site-blocking and content monitoring software/hardware. Know when the school can intervene and provide consequences in bullying incidents.

– If a student violated the school's technology use policy by using school-based technology to bully another student.

– If off campus incidents result in substantial disruption of the learning environment.

– If the incident doesn't fall under the school's purview parents should be alerted.

- Have a formal relationship with a local law enforcement department capable of conducting computer and network forensic examination should the need arise.

3 Assess the scope of bullying at your school to determine whether or not it is a significant problem.

- How many students have been bullied, or have bullied others?

4 Make sure your school has an Internet Safety Educational program.

- Students learn
 - Acceptable computer and internet safety
 - Safe password protection
 - How to recognize bullying
 - How to respond to bullying
- Provide staff training on how to recognize and intervene in bullying issues.
- Designate classroom time for the topic of bullying.
- Educate your school community about responsible internet use.
 - Raise awareness through sessions like assemblies, in-class discussions.
 - Invite specialists to talk to staff and students.
 - Sponsor a community education event.
 - Provide referral resources & tip-sheets on responding to bullying to the families.



Empower Teens

Resources & strategies for teens who have been the target of bullying, who want to help a friend who has been bullied, or who have engaged in bullying.



Bullying comes in many different forms and can include saying mean things, spreading rumors, posting inappropriate photos, bothering someone, and making threatening remarks, among other things. Remember, it's never your fault if you are bullied by someone, and it can happen to anyone.

Here are some effective solutions, which other people have found helpful, and can help you solve whatever problem you are facing. It is important that you feel comfortable and confident in how you choose to handle the situation. Always think through the consequences of what you might do in advance with your decision, and if this situation takes place online, please be sure to use one of the multiple tools Facebook offers to help handle the problem.

Tools available on Facebook

(You can choose to do one or more of the following.)

- **Use the "Report" link.** Facebook includes a Report link for reporting abuse, bullying, harassment and other issues on nearly every piece of content. Our global teams work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to review things you report and remove anything that violates our Community Standards (<https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/>). We don't include any information about the person who filed the report when we reach out to the person responsible.
- **If you've reported something, you have the option to check the status of your report from your Support Inbox.** Keep in mind that only you can see your Support Inbox (to [me/support.inbox](https://support.inbox)). Finally, get help from a trusted friend or adult so you have the support needed to handle the situation.
- **Unfriend the person.** To unfriend someone, go to that person's profile, hover over the Friends button at the top of their profile and select Unfriend.
- **Block the person.** You can block someone to unfriend them and prevent them from starting conversations with you or seeing things you post on your profile. In addition, people you block can no longer tag you, invite you to events or groups or add you as a friend. Blocking is reciprocal, so you also won't be able to see things they post or start conversations with them. When you block someone, we don't notify them that you've blocked them. To block someone, click (lock icon) at the top right of any Facebook page, click How do I stop someone from bothering me? enter the name or email address of the person you want to block and click Block.



© Facebook 2016



How to empower yourself



Remember that bullying is never your fault, and it can happen to anyone.

Bullying might make you feel embarrassed and like you're all alone, but you're not alone. Reach out to someone you trust to help you through the situation. No one should ever have to tolerate being bullied.

Stay calm

- Take a few deep breaths. Clear your mind so you can make the best possible decision about whom to contact and what you want to say them.
- Do not approach the person who bullied you when you're upset.

Tell someone you trust

- If you've been threatened or you're worried about your safety, talk to someone you trust immediately.
- Reach out to a close friend, a family member, a teacher or even the authorities.

Be safe

- Never risk being alone with anyone who makes you feel unsafe.
- If you talk to the person, use simple and direct language, remain calm.

Don't retaliate

- Don't try to get even or put the person who bullied you down.
- Don't do or say something you might regret later.



Suggestions for what to do & when

(Read on a few pages first to find out if one does, if not, you can try teacher one.)

For minor incidents, like teasing or a single instance of saying mean things, try this...

1. Just ignore it. Take a deep breath and let it go! It's something that doesn't really matter to you and won't affect your reputation. People who bully are looking for a response, show them you have the upper hand!
2. Contact the person, if the person is someone you know well, give them the benefit of the doubt. It's possible the person really is just trying to be funny and not hurtful. Call them or send a message online to ask them about the post/photo and ask them to remove it. Facebook provides some suggested messages for you, or you can write your own. Writing to get even may just make things worse.
3. Delete the message or photo. If you don't like the photo or message, delete it from the areas of the online service where you can. You might want to consider printing, or otherwise saving the post or photo in case you need it later.

For more upsetting incidents, when you are upset but not in danger, try this...

1. Get help from a trusted friend or adult. They can help you figure out whether and how to let the person know that what was posted was hurtful. Writing to get even may just make things worse.

Example conversation starters with person who bullied you.

- Sometimes a simple statement like this will do the trick, "Hey, NAME - that comment wasn't funny. I don't like it, please take it down."
 - If you know they are doing it intentionally, you can say, "Hey, the photo/post makes me very uncomfortable. Please take it down and delete it. I'm sure you wouldn't want a post/photo like this on your Timeline."
 - If they take it down, you can follow up with, "Will you please tell everyone that what you wrote was a joke, to make sure people know it wasn't true?"
2. Contact someone you trust for help. Send a message or call someone you trust like a close friend, family member, or someone at your school who can give you good advice. Facebook's Bullying Prevention Center and the Bullying Prevention Center provides guidance for parents and teachers.

- Example conversation starters with a trusted friend or adult.
- "NAME is spreading mean rumors about me which aren't true and everybody believes them. I don't know what to do. Please help me figure out how to stop NAME from posting mean things/photos about me."
 - "Please help me deal with NAME and figure out how to let other people know the rumor isn't true."
 - If you are talking to a friend, you might say, "Can you come with me to talk to my mom/dad/teacher. I could use someone with me to back me up."

3. Block and filter access to the person. Take advantage of the privacy settings on Facebook to block future posts.
4. Report the content to Facebook. Give a clear description of where the content is.
5. Save the post/photo if something was posted online.

- It's a good idea to keep track of the dates and times of all incidents, which can help prove what is going on and who started it.
- Take screenshots of the post/photo. You may need it later to share with others if the behavior doesn't stop.

If you feel your safety, or the safety of someone else is threatened, like someone won't stop stalking you, posting explicit photos, threats of physical harm, sexual harassment, extortion, try this...

1. Talk to a trusted adult and contact the authorities immediately. If you feel your safety is in danger, the authorities or an adult can help you take the necessary steps to protect your safety. If you are in immediate danger, dial emergency services.

Example conversation starters with a trusted friend or adult:

- "NAME, has threatened to hurt me after school today, and I'm really nervous. I need your help with this right away!"
- "Please help me figure out how to deal with NAME who is threatening me. I'm really scared."



How to empower yourself & your friend

Bullying behavior is not one thing. It can include saying mean things, spreading rumors or inappropriate photos, bothering someone, or making threatening remarks, among other things.

Helping a friend who is being bullied is the right thing to do. We all need to back up our friends. When someone helps someone who is the target of bullying, it almost always stops the bullying. Here are some things you can do to support your friend.



1. Make a decision to help. Stand up! Be someone who decides to help out a friend in need. Make sure you have the support you need to help your friend. Involve other friends, or others you trust. Everyone's safety is a priority.

2. Make sure you are calm before you do anything. If you're nervous, take a few deep breaths to help calm down before you talk to your friend so you can think clearly before you ask them how you can help. If you're worried about your friend's safety, talk to the authorities, or a trusted adult at home or school immediately. It's often helpful to problem solve with an adult.

3. Talk to your friend about it. Let your friend know you are there for them, that they are not alone, and that you want to help them best handle the situation. Your encouragement and support will mean everything to them.

- Remind your friend that they haven't done anything to deserve this and no one should bully them.
- Help them make a decision about how to behave in front of the person who bullied them. Help your friend build their confidence, even if they don't feel that way right now.

4. Ask your friend what they need. Work with your friend to find a solution.
- Encourage your friend not to be alone with the person who bullied them if you feel they are in danger.

- Try to help them avoid escalating the problem or reacting in an aggressive way towards the person who bullied them. Retaliation can make things worse and also makes the cycle continue.

- Say, "I think that trying to get back at them will only make things worse so that's not a good idea - how would you like to handle the situation in a positive way? How can I help? What would you like me to do?"
- Don't speak for your friend unless they ask you to.

5. Spend time with your friend. Offer to hang out with your friend at school. Making them feel supported and heard are helpful for a friend who has been bullied.

6. If you're uncomfortable trying to help on your own. Get help from someone you trust.

7. Help your friend tell an adult. Encourage your friend to talk with a trusted adult. Everyone needs support through difficult times.

8. Talk to other friends who care. Ask them to post or send caring messages to your friend, build a support system for your friend.

9. Check back over time with your friend. Give them a call or hang out with them to see how they are doing and continue to let them know you care.



Suggestions for what to do & when

Remember these things you can do for specific incidents. Help your friend plan more than one solution. What if it doesn't work, they can move onto the next one!

For minor incidents, you can give your friend the following advice...

1. Just ignore it. After talking with your friend and deciding together that the incident was not that big of a deal, suggest they "let it go." People who bully are often looking for a response, don't give it to them!
2. Contact the person. If the person is someone your friend knows well, see if your friend wants to give them the benefit of the doubt. It's possible the person really is just trying to be funny and not hurtful. You and/or your friend can call them or send a message to ask them about the post/photo and ask them to remove it. Facebook provides suggested messages or you can write your own. Make sure you or your friend does not write a message to get even. That could make things worse.

Example conversation starters with a trusted friend or adult:

- "NAME, your friends are not going to take this seriously. You can just ignore it. If the person doesn't get a reaction, maybe they will stop."
- "NAME, let's talk to NAME together to give him/her the benefit of the doubt. Maybe she was just kidding."

3. Delete the message or photo. If your friend just doesn't like the photo or message, delete it from the areas of the online service where you are able. You may want to consider printing or otherwise saving the post or photo in case your friend needs it later.

For more upsetting incidents, but not ones that put your friend in danger, try this...

1. Help your friend calmly decide. If your friend agrees and it's safe, you and/or your friend could approach the person who bullied your friend and ask them to stop.

There is no guarantee the person will remove the post or photo, but if you or your friend send a clear and direct message, they might. If you are unsure about what to say, ask for help from a trusted friend or adult. Facebook provides suggested messages or you can write your own.

Make sure you do not write a message to get even. That could make things worse. Also, do not approach the person who bullied your friend alone. If you do not feel comfortable,

Example conversation starters with your friend:

- "Do you feel comfortable if I go with you to NAME and say 'hey, that post was mean - please take it down?' I also can help you write a message to them."
- "Let's talk to someone who can help us. Who do you trust the most to give us good suggestions? We can go together to talk to them."

- "We can also go into your privacy settings to make sure you are set up so only your friends can see your profile. Then we can delete the post and 'unfriend' or block the person who bullied you."

Example conversation starters with the person who bullied your friend:

- "Hey NAME, that post wasn't funny and it makes NAME upset. It's not cool to post mean things like this. Please take it down."
- "Hey, this is wrong and you need to apologize and make it right. You really should take the post down, let everyone know it wasn't true, and that you have apologized."

- "Hey, the post you wrote about NAME is mean and disrespectful. You really need to take it down. It's not cool!"

2. Help your friend contact someone they trust for help.

Help your friend send a message or call someone they trust like a close friend, family member, or someone at your school who can give you and your friend good advice. You can also let them know that the Help Center provides guidance for parents and teachers.

Example conversation starters with your friend if s/he is upset and needs additional support:

- "It makes sense that you are really upset about this. Let's talk to an adult right away. Who do you think is best? We shouldn't try to handle this on our own. Let's save the post so whoever is helping us, can see for themselves!"



Suggestions for what to do & when continued

Remember these things you can do for specific incidents. Help your friend plan more than one solution. What if it doesn't work, they can move onto the next one!

- "Let's also let Facebook know what's going on, so maybe they can help to remove the post and deal with the situation."

3. Block and filter access to the person. You can block them and prevent them from starting conversations with you or seeing things you post on your profile. In addition, people you block can no longer tag you, invite you to events or groups or add you as a friend. Blocking is reciprocal, so you also won't be able to see things they post or start conversations with them when you block someone. Facebook does not notify them that you've blocked them.

4. Report the content to Facebook. Facebook includes a "Report" link for reporting abuse, bullying, harassment and other issues on nearly every piece of content. To report a post, click on the top right of the post you want to report and choose the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions.

5. Save the post/photo.

- It's a good idea to keep track of the dates and times of all incidents, which can help prove what is going on and who started it.

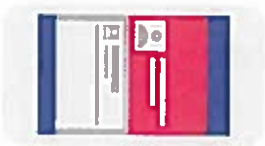
- You can also print the post/photo. You may need it later to share with others, if the behavior doesn't stop.

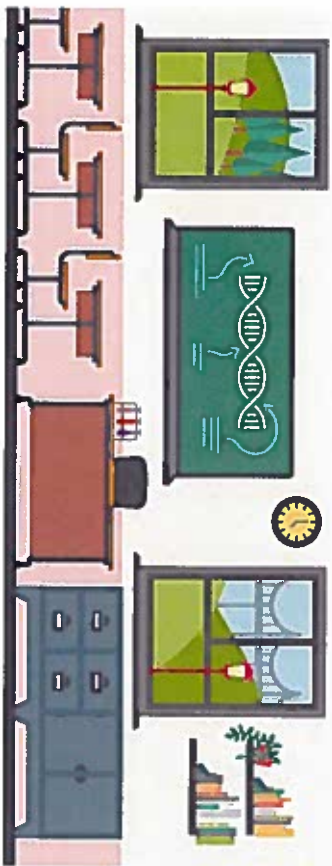
If you feel your friend's safety is threatened...

1. Talk to a trusted adult and contact the authorities immediately. If you feel your friend's safety is in danger the authorities or an adult can help you take the necessary steps to protect your friend's safety. If you friend is in immediate danger, dial emergency services. Let them know exactly where your friend is located.

Example conversation starter with a trusted friend or adult:

- "NAME has threatened to hurt NAME after school today and I know s/he is really nervous. S/he could really use your help with this right away!"





How to respond if you have been told that you have been mean or hurtful to someone or you have been accused of bullying someone.

Bullying happens when someone is mean, hurtful, or in some cases, scares another person and the person who is hurt or scared has a hard time defending himself or herself. Bullying can also include spreading rumors, posting an inappropriate photo, bothering someone, or making threatening remarks, whether in person or online.

Each of us is responsible for our own behavior and for everything we say. It's never okay to bully or hurt someone else, and no one should be expected to tolerate being bullied. No matter what a person says or does, the way you behave towards another person is always your own choice. If you are upset by someone walking away, having a conversation, telling someone what you didn't like about his or her behavior, or problem solving together are more effective ways of handling oneself. Remember, we can never know what will make someone upset, so it's best not to take any chances.

Kids who get involved in bullying behavior sometimes:

- Are not caring of other people's feelings
- Have a hard time understanding other people's perspectives
- Tend to blame others for things that go wrong
- Have a hard time handling anger and other strong emotions
- Are verbally aggressive toward others
- Seek power in relationships
- Prove physical rights

If any of these behaviors sound like things you do, it's a good idea to talk with a trusted adult like a family member or teacher to get help.

Find some tips to help you if you have been accused of bullying on the following page. ▶

General Advice

1. Apologize. Whether or not you believe you hurt someone, if someone feels hurt by something you said or did then there is some kind of problem. It's important to make a sincere apology. Apologizing can:

- a. show strong character because people know you are able to say you're sorry.
- b. is the first step in repairing a relationship; and
- c. can help you shift your reputation away from being a "bully." People might respect you for trying to create a better environment for you and your peers by clearing the air and apologizing.

If you are unsure about why you were seen as a bully, apologize and ask the person to let you know more about why what you said or did was hurtful. Let the person know you will be more careful and will not repeat it.

It is also important to let everyone who witnessed your behavior or who saw your post, know that you are sorry and have apologized. Instead of being seen as a bully you can now be viewed as a positive role model for how to repair a bullying situation.

2. If you need help in apologizing, get guidance from a trusted friend or adult. If you are afraid or uncomfortable about how to apologize or repair the relationship, ask a trusted adult or friend for guidance. You might have the friend or adult with you when writing a message, calling the person, or meeting with them in person. Discussing the situation with a trusted friend or adult also can help you to understand your own behavior better.

Below are potential "conversation starters" that may help you apologize or resolve the situation.

If you realize that you did was wrong and feel sorry for what you did:

Example conversation starters with the person you hurt:

- "X, I am very sorry for what I did. I understand why you are upset. I'm going to take down the photo/post right away. I should never have done that. I hope you will forgive me."

Example conversation starters with a trusted friend:

- "X, I was not thinking when I posted this message about Y. I'm so sorry that I hurt X! Everyone is saying mean things about me, and I don't want to be seen as a bully. Please help me figure out how to apologize to Y and everyone else."

If you are CONFUSED or SURPRISED about why someone accused you of bullying because you did not intend to hurt someone, apologize and ask for clarification.

Example conversation starters with the person you hurt:

- "I'm so sorry for what I did. I had no idea that what I said was so hurtful. I really didn't mean to hurt you. Please let me know what was wrong with what I said so I can be sure not to do it again. Can you accept my apology? Please let me know if there is anything else I can do."

Example conversation starters with friends who witnessed the event:

- "On Thursday, I wrote something on X's wall that was seen as disrespectful. I thought it was funny, but I now realize why they were upset. I apologized to X and want everyone to know that I am sorry."

Example conversation starters with a trusted friend:

- "X just sent me a message saying that they were hurt by what I said. I'm not sure what I did wrong. I really didn't mean to hurt X. Do you know why X was so hurt? I want to apologize, but just don't know what to say."

If you felt JUSTIFIED in what you did and intended to retaliate because you feel that they hurt you first:

Example conversation starters with the person you hurt:

- "X, what I just posted was not okay and I'm sorry. I was upset about what you said to me the other day and instead of telling you I posted that message, I still feel that what you said was wrong too. I want to apologize and I hope you can too. I'll let everyone know that what I did was wrong and hope you will too."

Example conversation starters with friends who witnessed:

- "On Thursday, I wrote something on X's wall that was really disrespectful. What I said was not true and I apologized to X. We agreed that we were both wrong."

Example conversation starters with a trusted friend:

- "X, I need to talk to you. Last week X said something that made me really mad so I posted something mean about X. I know it was wrong, but in that moment I felt justified in doing it. I want to apologize, but I don't know what to say. I think we were both wrong and think we should both apologize to each other and all our friends."

Bullying Prevention

Check out the important tips below to help teens prevent or respond to bullying in their community.



- 1 Become an expert.**
 - Educate yourself, understand bullying and how/where it occurs. Ask your friends for ideas about how to prevent it.
- 2 Help educate your community and be an advocate.**
 - Speak out against bullying. Have a conversation with your friends about bullying.
 - Encourage your friends to share their experience as someone who will stand up. This will start a positive ripple effect.
 - Start a club, build a campaign or host an event to raise awareness.
 - Interview experts to learn more about the issue and what can be done.
 - Create information posters to build awareness in school about problem and solutions.
 - Be a role model and mentor to younger students & relatives about how to be safe online and offline.
- 3 Be smart, safely secure your identity & personal info.**
 - Set up privacy controls in your profile so you can control who sees your information.
 - Protect your password and change it regularly.
 - Never open unidentified or unsolicited messages.
 - Log out of online accounts when not in use.
 - Use online search engines to search your name regularly. Try to remove personal information that makes you uncomfortable.
- 4 Be responsible.**
 - Pause before you post. Don't post anything that may compromise your reputation, or the reputation of others. Treat others how you want to be treated.
 - Assume everyone has access to your profile (parents, teachers, future employers and authorities).
 - Use good judgment when putting pictures up.
 - Don't discuss things or use language you wouldn't want your family to see.
 - Don't add people as "friends" unless you know them.
- 5 Be compassionate - Be strong.**
 - Make a decision to help - ask yourself, "am I going to let this person bully this person, or am I going to do something about it?"
 - Support the target!
 - Try to include anyone who is being left out.
 - Discourage those who hurt or humiliate others. If it's safe, make it clear you think the behavior is wrong.
 - If you see something going on that is wrong, speak up or leave the room and tell a trusted adult.
- 6 Never retaliate or get back at the responsible person.**
 - Be "bigger" than that, retaliation keeps the cycle going.
- 7 Never encourage or indirectly contribute to the behavior.**
 - Don't forward hurtful messages, laugh at improper jokes or content, or support the behavior just to fit in.

Empower Parents & Families

Resources: 3 strategies for parents and families who have a teen who has been the target of bullying or who has a teen that's engaged in bullying behavior.



How to respond if your child has been the target of bullying.

If your child has reached out to you and asked you for help to handle a bullying situation, what would you say or do? Here, we provide some general tips and strategies to help you have a successful conversation and handle the most frequently reported problems of bullying. Remember, you are the expert about your own child and also the role model for how to handle difficult situations.

step | one

Set yourself up for a successful conversation with your child

1. **Take your child seriously and listen.** If your child wants to talk to you about a bullying situation, take it seriously. Your ability to listen to your child and understand their feelings and experiences means everything to your child. It is a basic human need to be heard and understood.
2. **Find the best space to have the conversation.** Find a private place to talk with your child where you both will be comfortable and your child feels safe to talk freely. Consider taking a walk or going for a snack. Give your child the physical distance they need during the conversation.
3. **Before you talk to your child, check in with your own feelings.** Take a deep breath, recognize the strong emotions you might have about the situation, and, most importantly, manage them before you talk with your child.
4. **Remember, you are the role model.** Your child is learning about the best and worst ways to respond to challenging situations like bullying from watching you. Your feelings are contagious. If you stay calm, your child will more likely be calm and learn how to deal with challenging situations effectively. If you notice you are still upset and not sure you can stay calm while talking to your child, hold off until you feel ready to have a successful conversation.

step | two

Talk with your child about the problem.

Bullying comes in many forms online, including someone saying mean things, spreading rumors, posting an inappropriate photo of your child, someone not leaving your child alone, or someone making threatening remarks to your child. The first step to helping your child is to be a good listener and then talk through the problem.

1. **Give your child unconditional support.** No matter what has happened, let your child know you will listen to them. Let your child get out the full story without interrupting or criticizing them. Your child needs to feel emotionally safe in order to be open and honest with you. Reassure your child that you will not go behind their back to "fix or report" the problem and that you will work with them to find a positive resolution.

Some key points to guide your initial conversation:

- Be a good listener; don't put words into your child's mouth or jump to conclusions.
- Use a calm and steady voice throughout the conversation. Avoid using harsh or accusatory language, which can result in your child either shutting down or becoming more upset.
- Avoid being judgmental or critical about what behavior they were engaged in before the bullying incident.
- Do not blame your child for being the target of bullying.
- Avoid making promises you can't keep, but do reassure your child that you want to help find a successful resolution to the problem, and that you will do your best to make sure their life doesn't get more difficult.

2. **Use gentle exploration and empathy.** This will help you to find out what happened, how your child feels about it, and what they might want to do. Make sure your child knows that the reason you are asking questions is because you need all the facts, so you can do your best to help them solve the problem.

Check out our Conversation Starters:

Example Conversation Starter: "I'm so sorry this happened to you, and I'm glad you told me. Can you tell me more about what happened and how you are feeling?"

Avoid comments like: "I told you not to be friends with taggressor's name!" or "Come on – you're making a big deal about nothing – bullying is just a stage every kid goes through."

Additional conversation starters include:

- "Child's Name!, that sounds upsetting. I can understand why you are feeling angry, afraid, sad, embarrassed. Let's go find a quiet place so we can talk privately."
- "Child's Name!, I'm so glad you told me. You did the right thing and I promise I will do my best to help you manage this. As long as you are not in any danger, I won't do anything you don't want me to do."
- "Child's Name!, I'd like to know if you have experienced other mean things like this. It's good for both of us to think through this together."
- "Child's Name!, bullying is not ok. I know it's difficult for you to talk about it. I really want to help you figure out what to do."

If your child is being threatened, you might say something like the following:

- "Child's Name!, it's never ok for someone to threaten you. I'm really glad you came to me. Let's talk through this together and figure out what to do."
- "Child's Name!, I can see why you are so upset about this, this is something that we need to take care of right away. You did the right thing coming to me."

If your child doesn't want to do anything about it:

- This is a time when adult family members need to use their best judgment. Your child might not want to do anything because they are afraid of losing a relationship, escalating the situation, being bullied again, or are uncomfortable expressing themselves.
- Some kids don't want to be a "cattle call" and are afraid of getting someone in trouble. It's important to make sure that's not the reason your child doesn't want to do anything. Explain the difference between "tattling" and "helping." Tattling is about getting someone in trouble – usually when it's not dangerous. Telling someone that you have been bullied isn't tattling. It's helping ensure the safety of someone who might be in trouble.



step | three

work with your child on an action plan. Empower your child to come up with a few ways to deal with the situation. Sometimes an initial plan doesn't work out and it's important to have multiple options.

Here are some ways to help your child manage the most common types of bullying. If it's a serious situation (e.g., someone is threatening your child), take immediate action because your child's safety is the priority.

1. Solve the problem together. Ask your child what they want to do and how you can help.
- First, ask fact-finding and open-ended questions to better understand what happened.

Example Conversation Starters

- "In order to best help you, I need to know what happened and who was involved?"
 - "What was going on between you and the person before this happened?"
 - "Let's look at the photo/post together."
- If you feel like you need more information or are not satisfied with what you are hearing, ask "what else might we do?" to help generate alternative solutions.

2. Using Facebook to create an action plan. Some issues between friends on Facebook can be handled with the multiple tools that Facebook offers.

First, ask fact-finding and open-ended questions to better understand what happened.

Here are a few things to know about reporting on Facebook

- **Reporting is easy.** Nearly every piece of content on Facebook has a "Report" link.
- **Social Reporting tools enable you to solve many problems effectively.** Facebook enables you to report issues either directly to the person you are having an issue with OR to a trusted member of your community. Explore this option from the Report link.
- **Your child can report the post to Facebook.** If you click this box in the report flow, Facebook endeavors to review every post in a timely manner. If the post or photo does violate the terms, it will be removed.
- **Unfriend the person.** Your child might want to unfriend the person. This means the person will be removed from their Facebook friend list. You will no longer see their posts in your Newsfeed.



- **Block the person.** Your child may want to block the person altogether. This prevents the account who is being blocked from starting conversations with your child or seeing things that your child posts. They will also no longer be able to find each other on Facebook.
- 3. What to do if you and/or your child think the situation can be handled offline. Brainstorm some action steps that each of you think are realistic and likely to be effective.

General tips

- **If your child is being physically threatened, feeling scared or has any other strong emotions** about what has happened, let them know that you are there for them and will do everything you can to ensure their safety. Explore with your child who else might help to resolve the problem like a trusted teacher or friend.
- **If your child expresses emotional distress or thoughts of self-harm** it is important to seek help from a mental health professional immediately and make sure your child is not left alone. You can ask a school counselor or psychologist for advice.
- **It's best not to contact the parents of the bully when you are upset,** to avoid escalating the situation. If you feel strongly that it is the right thing to do, be sure you are calm and motivated to find a positive outcome.
- **Revisit with your child access to instant messaging, e-mail, social networking websites, cell phone or the Internet in general.**

Options to consider for more serious incidents:

- **If the person who you are reporting is part of the school community,** decide with your child who the best person would be to talk to at their school such as the principal, a counselor or a trusted teacher.

- **Conversation Starter:** "Your safety is the most important thing. It is really important to let someone at your school know, so they can help prevent this from happening again. Who do you trust the most that we could talk to together?"

- **If the person is using an online service to target your child,** report the content to the online service provider, and ask them to remove the offensive material.

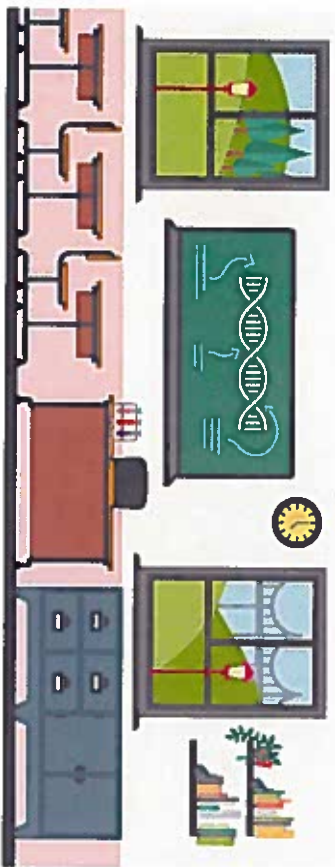
- Report the incident or offensive profiles to your service provider and request the post be taken down.
- Trace e-mails and text messages. Attempt to identify the perpetrator.
- Save the evidence, i.e. print screen or save pages.

- **Report to law enforcement for serious incidents** (threats, intimidation or exploitation)

step | four

Follow up with your child

1. **Ensure your child feels safe to go back to school.** Work on a plan with your child for how they will navigate their day.
 - Suggest to your child they find a close friend to be with at school the following day. Ask your child who they would choose to make sure they have someone they can turn to when they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
 - If your child doesn't have a friend to ask, suggest that they choose an older brother or sister, relative, or trusted teacher.
 - Roleplaying can help your child learn and practice strategies to handle possible scenarios that might occur at school (e.g., seeing the bully in class or the hallway).
 - Your child should use simple, direct language – and if they have to interact with the bully, they should try to avoid showing anger or fear, but rather show they are calm and confident.
2. **Check in with your child.** At the end of your initial conversation and each day for a few weeks check in to make sure they feel comfortable and safe at school. You also want to be sure that the situation has been handled as best as possible.
 - Help your child to come up with a positive message they can say to themselves when they see the person who bullied them such as, "I have lots of friends and am strong and capable."
 - Work with your child on what they might say and their "stance" if they have to interact with the person who bullied them. For example, they should stand at a distance and use a calm and even voice.
 - If the problem was resolved – the post or photo was removed – your child should not go out of their way to approach the bully, however. If their relationship has the potential for being repaired, they can thank them and let them know that they did the right thing.
3. **Check in with your child.** At the end of your initial conversation and each day for a few weeks check in to make sure they feel comfortable and safe at school. You also want to be sure that the situation has been handled as best as possible.



How to respond if your child has bullied someone else.

If you found out that your child has bullied someone else, or your child reached out to you for help handling the situation, what would you say or do?

You are the expert on your own child. But, this likely will be a sensitive conversation, so here are some general tips to work towards a positive interaction, and specific strategies to help you handle the situation.

You are the expert on your own child. But, this likely will be a sensitive conversation, so here are some general tips to work towards a positive interaction, and specific strategies to help you handle the situation.

2. Set yourself up for a successful conversation with your child.

- Find the best space to have the conversation. Find a private place to talk with your child where you will both be comfortable and your child will feel safe to talk freely. You might consider taking a walk or going for a snack. Give your child the physical distance they need during the conversation.
- Take a moment before you talk to your child to check-in and manage your own feelings. This includes taking a deep breath, recognizing the strong emotions you may have about the situation, and managing them before you talk with your child. Using positive "self-talk" like

saying to yourself, "I love my child and want the best for him/her, so I will remain calm when we talk" can help you to remain calm and guide the conversation in the right direction.

- If you feel like you might say something to your child you will regret, it's important to remember that everyone makes mistakes. This challenging moment presents an opportunity to help your child develop empathy and learn healthier ways to treat others.
- Remember, you are the role model. Your child's learning about the best and worst ways to respond to challenging situations like bullying from watching you. Your feelings are contagious. If you stay calm, your kids will more likely be calm and learn how to deal with challenging situations effectively. If you notice you are still upset and not sure you can stay calm while talking to your child, hold off until you feel ready to have a successful conversation. ▶

- Give your child support, and listen. No matter what has happened, let your child know you will listen to them without interrupting or criticizing them. Your child needs to feel emotionally safe to be open and honest with you. Reassure your child that you will not go behind their back and that you will work with them to find a positive resolution.

You likely will have judgments about what happened, especially if your child has disappointed you with their mean behavior. However, it is important for you not to express those judgments in a critical way. Try your best not to say things like, "What's wrong with you? Are you stupid?" Rather, say something like "I am disappointed that this happened. This is serious – it is not ok for you or anyone else to spread rumors/say mean things/threaten, etc."

2. Talk with your child about the problem. Some key points to guide your initial conversation include:

- Find out what happened. Find out exactly what happened, how long it has been happening, and if anything that has happened after it has been reported.
- Your background knowledge of your child's relationship with the person who was bullied, could influence how you discuss and handle the situation.
- When asking your child about what happened, be a good listener; don't put words into your child's mouth, or jump to conclusions.
- Communicate your values. Let your child know that bullying behavior is unacceptable and that there will be consequences. Remind your child of important key values like kindness, respect and empathy.

If you find out from someone else that your child has been engaging in bullying behavior

- **Conversation Starter:** "(Child's Name), I got an upsetting call from someone today who told me that you have been saying mean things/spreading rumors/etc. about one of your classmates. I'm very disappointed to hear this. It's not ok and you must stop immediately. Tell me exactly what happened so we decide what action needs to be taken."

If your child discloses to you that they have been engaging in bullying behavior

- **Conversation Starter:** "(Child's Name), it took courage for you to tell me this when you know how upsetting it would be for me to hear. I'm not going to scream and

yell. But I want you to know that it's never ok to say mean things/spread rumors/etc. Let's sit down and talk through the situation so we can figure out the best way to handle this."

If you find out the situation involved psychological harm or physical threats to another person, you will want to take immediate action after hearing your child's side of the story, because everyone's safety is priority.

- **Conversation Starter:** "(Child's Name), I just found out that you threatened to hurt/said really mean things about one of your classmates. I'm incredibly disappointed and need you to know that this is unacceptable behavior. Tell me what your reason was for doing this."

3. Explore the best possible solutions to the problem and take responsible action.

- Decide on your course of action. With your child, decide how the situation will be handled both on and off line.
- Decide on the consequences. Let your child know that in your home there are consequences for being mean or hurtful to others. For some families this means taking away technology privileges, for others it means curtailing time spent with friends.
- Stay firm if your child begs you not to do anything, or does not want to do anything. Let them know that their behavior is not acceptable and that there will be consequences. You also must be consistent – that is follow through with whatever consequences were set.
- If the bullying happened online, help your child remove the offensive content if they have not already done so. You might ask your child to imagine how they would feel if someone had posted something like this about them.
- Avoid making promises you can't keep. But do reassure your child that you want to find a successful resolution to the problem and will do your best to make sure their life doesn't get more difficult through actions you will take.
- Learn as much as possible. It will be important to find out whether this behavior is new for your child or whether something else might have occurred that you do not know about. This will help you decide on how you will handle this at home, including consequences, or seeking professional counseling for your child.

- Some recommended solutions to help your child resolve the problem with the target:
 - If this occurred at school, make an appointment with the principal to reinforce that you will work with school administration and your child to handle the situation as best as possible, that you will follow the school's policy about the consequences for your child and that there will be consequences at home for your child's behavior.

Encourage your child to apologize privately and/or publicly. Decide whether your child can do it alone, or may need your guidance to write the language for an authentic, meaningful apology.

Example of Parent's coaching for private apology:

- "[Child's Name] – What you did is not okay and you need to take responsibility for your actions. First, you need to remove the post/photo, and ask anyone who forwarded it to pull it down as well. If it happens again, your technology privileges will be taken away."

Example Public apology:

- "[Child's Name] – Let's sit together and think about how you can apologize to all the people your note went to." The note you help your child write to whoever received can be something like, "On Thursday I wrote something on X's wall that was really disrespectful. I was wrong to do it and am sorry I apologized to X and want everyone to know that what I wrote was not true."

If your child is the target of bullying and has agreed for you to reach out to the school.

(Note: Most schools only get involved if the bullying behavior happened using school based technology or if off-campus behavior results in disruption of the learning environment of other students.)

Example Parent to Teacher Conversation Starter:

- "I just learned that [Child's Name] was bullied by NAME. My child is extremely upset, as am I. There is nothing more important to me than my child's safety and well-being - and I need the school to handle this immediately. What is your policy for dealing with situations like this? How can we be sure that this will not happen again? I also would like to know the consequences for the child who bullied my child, and most importantly what can be done to help my child feel safe returning to school?"

If your child is the bully and you need to reach out to the school for the school has reached out to you)

Example Parent to Teacher Conversation Starters:

- "I'm here because I got a call that my child has bullied another child. Obviously, I'm very upset to learn that this happened. I've heard my child's story, but please tell me what you know about the situation. Who else was involved? Is there any history to this problem?"
- "I'd like my [Child's Name] to apologize to the child he hurt, and I'd like your help in figuring out the best possible way to do that."

I know my child did something that was seriously wrong and s/he has apologized to the other child. I still need to know how it's going to be handled in your class. Are there lessons on how to deal with emotions and conflict? What are you going to say to the class? How can we make sure both my child and the other child feel safe coming back to school for the mistake s/he made."

If your child is the bully and you need to reach out to the parent of the child s/he bullied

Example Parent to Parent Conversation Starters (on phone):

- FRIEND - "NAME, I'm so sorry I just learned that my son/daughter spread a rumor (identify incident) about your child. (Child's Name) understands that this is completely unacceptable. What do you know about the situation? I want to make sure your child knows that [Child's Name] wants to apologize if you and your son/daughter are ready to accept it. We will do everything possible to make sure this never happens again."

UNKNOWN CLASSMATE - "NAME, this is NAME and I'm reaching out to you because I want you to know how terribly sorry we are about what happened between our children. I don't know all of the circumstances, but I want to let you know that I'll be talking to my child about it. I will do everything I possibly can to make sure it doesn't happen again and ensure that [Child's Name] apologizes. Please accept my apologies."



4. Be clear about the consequences and follow through. If you have not established consequences for bullying behavior, do it now and follow through. Whatever consequences you decide on should be firmly applied, taking into consideration the severity of the incident and the child's comprehension of the hurt they have inflicted. For example, some families decide to limit or take away technology privileges at home for a period of time.

If your child has been bullied and you need to reach out to the bully's parent.

Example Parent Bullied Child to Parent Conversation Starters (on phone):

- "Hi, NAME, this is NAME, my son/daughter (Child's Name) told me that your son/daughter has been spreading rumors (identify incident) about him/her. Do you have a few minutes to talk about this?"

When talking to an OPEN-MINDED PARENT - Thank you for taking the time to talk about this. As you can imagine, my child and I are both very upset about what happened. The most important thing for us is that this never happens again and my child feels safe and comfortable to go back to school. I hope you can talk to your child about this and encourage him/her to apologize directly to my child. It would be even better if your child could post a public apology to the group that received the message. I'm sure you can understand why this so important for us to handle immediately."

When talking to a DEFENSIVE PARENT - I can understand that it is difficult to hear this about NAME, but it's really important for me to talk to you directly about this because the post was extremely upsetting to my child. I hope we can both agree that spreading rumors is unacceptable. Maybe there is a way for us to find out more about what happened between them so they can help them to resolve this in a better way. The most important thing for me is that my child feels safe and comfortable in school. I'm sure you feel the same for your child. Would it be possible for you to work with your child to apologize? It would be even better if your child could post a public apology to the group that received the message. I hope you agree that the most important thing is to ensure that this never happens again."

IF YOU INTEND TO INVOLVE THE SCHOOL - "I'd also like you to know that I'm going to contact our children's teacher, to make sure the school has something in place to communicate to all kids that bullying is not OK. Of course I'm going to ask the school to keep it confidential, but my child is afraid to go to school and the most important thing is that my child feels safe at school."

5. Opportunities that you might want to explore, include:

- Get more involved with your child's activities both offline and online. Pay close attention to your child's internet and cell phone activities to ensure that they have are behaving in ways that are aligned with your family's values.
- Look for educational opportunities everyday such as watching movies with your child that have a bullying theme and then discussing them as a family.
- Talk with the principal of your school about bringing a social and emotional learning program to your child's school. Find out what your school is doing to build a positive climate so your child feels safe, comfortable, and is able to learn. Also learn whether social and emotional skills instruction and training in conflict resolution is part of the curriculum.
- Consider counseling. Especially for severe or ongoing cases, counseling can explore the reason for their behavior, in a safe and confidential manner.





Overview

My Student is Being Bullied

My Student is Bullying Others

Prevention

Prevent bullying at your school



- Make it clear to students, parents and staff that bullying is unacceptable and that there are consequences for this kind of behavior.
- Empower students to speak up if they witness any kind of bullying.
- Look for opportunities to talk to students about bullying (ex: in literature, during casual conversation).

Remind students to ask for help



- Let students know that they can trust you, that you will listen to their concerns about bullying and that you will take them seriously to help them address the problem.
- Let students know that your school has created policies to protect everyone's well-being. These policies have specific consequences for bullying.

Bullying Prevention Hub



- If we know that somebody is bullying or disrespecting others, we will tell an adult.
- We will treat others online with the same respect that we do in person.
- We will not post any photos or videos of other people in an attempt to embarrass or shame them.

Create a school safety policy



- Experts recommend that all schools have a school safety policy and that it include bullying prevention policies.
- Clearly define bullying, harassment and intimidation and establish procedures to ensure the safety and protection of the student being bullied.
- Have an anonymous reporting system that will allow students and teachers to feel safe about reporting instances of bullying.
- Develop a formal procedure for investigating bullying incidents, include consequences and make it available to students.
- Familiarize yourself with the situations in which the school can intervene in bullying incidents, such as if the student violated school policy by using school property to bully, or if incidents happening outside of school are disrupting the school environment. If an incident doesn't fall under the school's policies, consider telling the parents of the students involved.

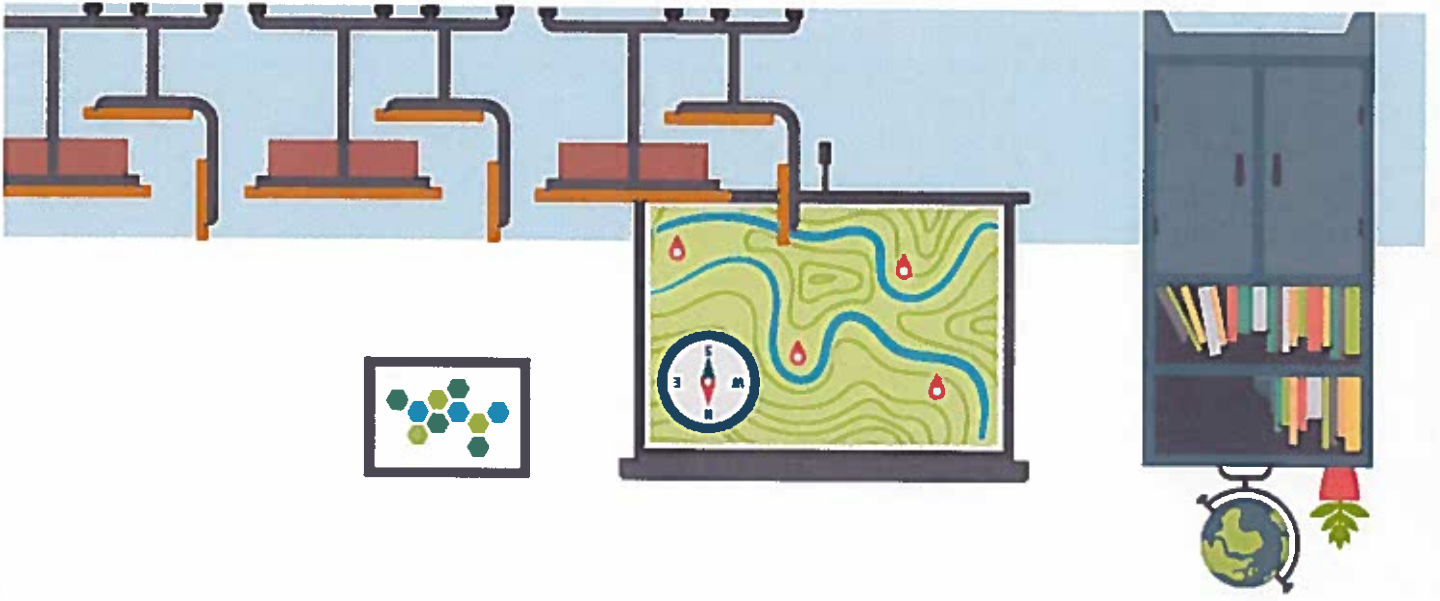
Create an internet safety education program at your school for students, teachers and staff

Bullying Prevention Hub



The program should include information about:

- Computer and internet safety
- Password protection and other security tips
- Responsible internet use
- Bullying prevention



Our family of companies:



- About
- Create Page
- Careers
- Cookies
- Terms
- Create Ad
- Developers
- Privacy
- Ad Choices
- Help