

# IDENTIFYING & REPORTING BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

It is important to understand the dangers regarding bullying, cyberbullying, and digital abuse, as well as related indicators, because children often do not report these behaviors.

- 1 in 4 children/teens will be bullied, and 1 in 5 will be cyberbullied.
- 1 in 3 teens consider the Internet as important as air, water, food and shelter, yet most are not provided with digital safety information to help protect them.

**Bullying** is repeated acts of hostility or aggression where there is a real or perceived imbalance of power and the victim cannot defend himself or herself. There are 4 types of bullying:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Social/Isolation
- Digital/Cyberbullying

**Cyberbullying** is repeated, threatening or harassing behavior that occurs online via the Internet or cellphone and can include:

- Sending harassing messages
- Posting false information
- Posting private pictures
- Gaining someone's trust to impersonate them and post their private information online

## Indicators of Bullying

### Physical

- Frequent cuts or bruises
- Injuries without good explanation
- Voices frequent physical complaints
- Changes in sleeping/eating patterns
- Ripped/torn clothing upon return from school or other activity
- Missing items or valuables

### Behavioral/Emotional

- Suddenly reluctant to go to school or participate in sports/other activities
- Frequently loses money or other possessions
- Frequently spends time alone
- Seems sad or depressed
- Suicidal

## Indicators of Digital/Cyberbullying

- Spends large amounts of time online, especially at night or when alone
- Receives an excessive amount of email or text messages
- Quickly exits computer or cell phone when parent or guardian approaches
- Withdrawn or depressed
- Does not want to go to school

**Report digital abuse and exploitation to local law enforcement and/or to the CyberTipline:**  
CyberTipline.org  
1-800-843-5678.

# IDENTIFYING & REPORTING BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

## Intervention Approaches

Bully	Target	Cyberbully	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set clear rules, guidelines</li> <li>• Teach empathy and acceptance of differences</li> <li>• Connect bully with positive peers</li> <li>• Model appropriate behavior and provide supervision</li> <li>• Follow policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open lines of communication</li> <li>• Teach response strategies</li> <li>• Connect with helpful and supportive friends/peers</li> <li>• Create safety plan; establish safe place, connect with Safe Adults, teach the MBF 5 Safety Rules</li> <li>• DO NOT use mediation or peer mediation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set clear rules, guidelines</li> <li>• Teach empathy and acceptance of differences</li> <li>• Connect bully with positive peers</li> <li>• Model appropriate behavior and provide supervision, monitoring technology use</li> <li>• Follow policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open lines of communication</li> <li>• Teach response strategies</li> <li>• Connect with helpful and supportive friends</li> <li>• Create safety plan; establish safe place, connect with Safe Adults, teach the MBF 5 Safety Rules</li> <li>• DO NOT use mediation or peer mediation</li> </ul>

- As a general guideline, it is important to understand what interventions are recommended when bullying occurs. (see the chart above for general information)
- **Listen, document details, and take reports of bullying seriously.**
- Understand that with suspicions of bullying, children will often deny it because they fear adult intervention will escalate the situation.
- **Check the facts for yourself; be supportive while seeking details; do not accuse the target of bullying or any wrongdoing such as, “you should stand up for yourself,” or “you should have told someone sooner.”**
- Do not deny or minimize the problem; respond with a firm but kind response that bullying is not tolerated.
- **Help the target brainstorm strategies to deal with bullies effectively such as using resistance strategies (saying “stop” confidently, buddying up with a friend, using humor), or seeking out a Safe Adult who will intervene. Ignoring the bully or allowing the bullying to continue will not make it stop; this usually has the opposite effect.**
- Remember, some social experiences, such as teasing and choosing certain friends over others, are developmentally normal behaviors for school-aged children and are not necessarily bad experiences. Group settings are not only for academic learning, but also for learning about social relationships and choosing friends wisely.
- **Encourage the targeted child to get involved in activities they enjoy to meet new people, both within and outside of school.**
- Ensure the proper policies and procedures are in place and that all staff are trained to recognize and respond appropriately to bullying.
- **Provide increased supervision in places where supervision is low and social interaction is high, such as playgrounds, cafeterias and bathrooms.**
- Ensure kids know how to report bullying; Provide a way for reporting anonymously.
- **Teach prevention programs that incorporate bullying prevention and include Bystander education.**