



## Steps To Take If Your Child Is Being Bullied At School

A PEATC  
Bullying Prevention and  
Awareness Brief  
for Virginia's Parents

### WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is characterized by aggression used within a relationship where the aggressor(s) has more real or perceived power than the target. Bullying can involve overt physical behavior or verbal, emotional, or social behaviors.

Cyber bullying can include offensive text messages or e-mails, rumors or embarrassing photos posted on social networking sites, or fake online profiles.

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## Steps To Take If Your Child Is Being Bullied At School

It is important that parents approach this situation in a calm manner and that parents keep records of facts in the situation. It is helpful if parents and school staff work together to resolve the issue. Parents can use the following steps to resolve the issue.

### I. Work With Your Child

Thank your child for telling you. Tell your child that the bullying is not his or her fault.

Talk with your child about the specifics of the situation and ask:

- Who is doing the bullying?
- What happened? Was it
  - o Verbal bullying?
  - o Physical bullying?
  - o Cyberbullying? (Meet directly with the principal if this is the case.)
- What days and times were you bullied?
- Where did the bullying take place?

Also find out how your child responded to the bullying and if other children or adults might have observed the bullying. Does your child know the names of these people? Keep a written record of this information.

Practice possible ways for your child to respond to bullying.

Tell a school staff (teacher, principal, other staff).

Go to step two if needed.

### II. Work With The School

Meet with your child's teacher:

- Discuss what is happening to your child using information from Step One.
- Ask what can be done so your child feels safe at school.

Keep a written record of what happened at this meeting, including names and dates.

Make an appointment to meet with the principal to discuss the bullying situation:

- Share information from Step One.
- Mention your work with your child regarding the situation.
- Share the outcome of your meeting with the teacher.
- Mention how the situation is impacting your child:
  - o Does not want to come to school
  - o Is fearful he or she will be hurt
  - o Complains of stomach aches, headaches, etc.
  - o Has other new behavior as a result of bullying
- Ask if school has a written policy on bullying and harassment. If so, ask for a written copy.
- Ask what the school can do to keep your child safe at school, on school bus, etc.

Go to step three if needed.

### III. Work With District Administration

Write a letter or send an email to district superintendent requesting a meeting to discuss the situation. Include name of child, age, grade, school, your address and phone number, background information of the bullying situation and how you have tried to resolve it. This letter should be as brief and factual as possible. Include the times you are available for this meeting. Send copies of this letter to the principal, special education director (if child is receiving special education) and chair of the school board. Be sure to keep a copy for yourself.

Prepare for this meeting by organizing the information you have kept and the questions you want to ask. Remember to ask what can be done to keep your child safe in school so he/she can learn.

Decide if you want to take someone with you. Clarify their role (e.g., take notes, provide support, contribute information about your child).

Be sure to keep a written record of this meeting, including who was present, what was discussed and any decisions that were made.

If after taking these three steps, the bullying issue has not been resolved, you may wish to contact a parent center or advocacy organization for assistance.

\*Email is an acceptable way of contacting persons.



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