

**West Islip Union Free School District
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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Richard A. Simon

**A
Parent's
Guide to
Bullying**

*Presented by West Islip's Bullying Awareness Committee
In partnership with COMPASS*



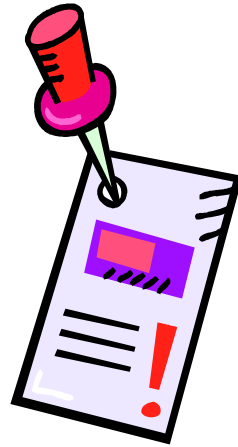
**Stay away from bullies.
Tell someone.
Avoid bad situations
Make friends.
Project confidence.**

OUT BULLYING!

A Message from the Board of Education

Bullying is a form of harassment and the West Islip Board of Education is committed to safeguarding the rights of all students within the school district to learn in an environment that is free from all forms of harassment, including bullying. Therefore, the Board, consistent with law, condemns all forms of bullying.

Bullying is defined as the act of threatening, stalking, coercing or intimidating, verbally, physically, in writing, by gesture or through electronic communication, the well-being, health, safety, freedom, or reputation of any person, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus, or that takes place off of school grounds but that is designed to or has the effect of interfering with a student's ability to attend school and/or to be educated in a safe, non-hostile environment.



From the Superintendent

Dear West Islip Residents,

Although bullying has been a presence in society for years, it has only recently been acknowledged as a cause of long-term emotional and psychological damage. Recent national surveys of students in grades 5-12 indicate that approximately one-third of the students had been bullied in the month prior to the survey.

The West Islip School District has taken this issue to heart and has instituted a variety of programs to combat bullying in its schools. In addition, it has created a committee composed of parents and educators to assess practices in the district and to review new programs that should be recommended for implementation. If you would like to join us in this endeavor, please contact Committee Chairperson and Principal of Udall Road Middle School, Mr. Dan Marquardt, at 631-893-3290.

Thank you for taking the time to review this document and for your ongoing support of the district.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Simon

RAS:JLK

West Islip Anti-Bullying Programs

Steer Clear of Bullies (CAPS): A program that teaches students to express concern and to respect differences.

Green Circle: This program focuses on developing positive social skills through appreciation and respect for human differences. It involves discussion of ethnic, religious and physical differences.

Character Education: Explores six pillars of character—respect, responsibility, fairness, kindness, trustworthiness and citizenship.

No Put Downs: This is a comprehensive, school-based program, which deals with tolerance, violence prevention, substance abuse prevention and life skills.



How to Help My Child

Below is a list of strategies which, if implemented, will help to keep your child safe and prevent bullying.

- Spend time listening to your child about his/her school day.
- Pay attention to how your child perceives his/her teacher. For instance: Does your child feel comfortable to make mistakes and take risks in the classroom? Does your child look forward to going to school?
- Learn the names of your child's classmates and how your child feels about each of them. (Middle and High School parents: Listen for names which often come up in various conversations. Also pay attention to current pastime activities of the peer group.)
- Keep a journal listing dates, times and situations that caused your child to feel anxious or afraid. Share your concerns with a trusted school official.
- Be mindful of how you, the adult, interact with your children, peers, family members, and school staff. Children mirror back what they learn from adults. (This is perhaps the most challenging of all strategies.)
- Remember, shy children are targets for bullying. Accept your child for who (s)he is and avoid comparisons to others. Role-play various bullying scenarios so your child will have some "come-backs" should (s)he need them.
- Build confidence in your child by helping to discover individual talents.
- Have your child join social groups (other than school-based) that encourage kindness and team building: scouts, sports, and community service organizations and/or religious based youth groups.
- Most important: Teach your child that (s)he is a treasure and that no one has the right to be mean.



What is Bullying?

Most experts would agree that bullying behavior is defined as someone who intentionally hurts another individual physically and/or emotionally.

Why Do Children Bully Others?

This is perhaps one of the most debated questions concerning bullying behavior. The most common belief as to why children bully other children is based on the desire for power, control and/or attention.

Children Who Bully:

There is not one specific bullying personality type. Society often stereotypes children who bully as spoiled, angry, loners, and/or large in physical stature. On the contrary, children who bully others are often perceived by others as being confident, popular with peers and teachers, and quite successful academic achievers. What is factual about children who bully is that they may grow into adults who have anger management issues who often blame others for their problems.

Children Who Are Bullied:

Bullying behavior places passive children at risk for becoming a target of bullying. Children who bully often choose shy children to harass simply because they believe they can get away with it. Children who bully believe that shy children will not report bullying because they are too afraid to disclose the inappropriate behavior to an adult or peer.

Symptoms and Effects of Being Bullied:

Many victims of bullying suffer from one or more of the following: headaches and stomachaches, difficulty making friends, fear of school and recess, poor concentration during class, depression and/or anxiety. Long term harassment can lead to poor self-esteem and poor social skills that last well into adulthood.

Mixed Signals:

The phrases, "It's part of childhood" or "It's a rite of passage" are two common examples of how adults can give mixed signals in regard to bullying behavior. Bullying is different than "just kidding around." Bullying is intentional and used to cause another individual pain. When adults condone, or give the "benefit of doubt" to a child bullying another child, it teaches children the wrong idea that bullying is okay.

What you can do if you witness bullying?



ADULTS:

Immediately stop the bullying. Stand between the child being bullied and the bully. Discuss the reason for the bullying or try to sort out the facts.

Let children know that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Support the bullied child in a way that allows him or her to regain self-control, to feel supported and safe from retaliation.

Include bystanders in the conversation and give them guidance about how they might appropriately intervene or get help next time.

If appropriate, impose immediate consequences for children who bully others.

Let children who bully know that you will be watching them and their friends closely to be sure that there is no retaliation.

CHILDREN:

Talk to someone who can help—an older student, your friends, classroom teacher, guidance counselor, school principal, sports coach, parents, or any adult you trust.

Remember.....telling is not tattling. Telling is what you do to get someone out of trouble. Tattling is what you do to get someone into trouble.

If you walk away and get help, you are part of the solution. If you stay and watch, you are part of the problem.

Stand up for kids who are bullied.....they can't do it themselves.

The best thing you can do for kids who are bullied is to be their friend. Comfort the person who was hurt and make it known that what happened was not fair or deserved.

Invite kids who are bullied to play with you somewhere else.

Tell kids who bully to back off...bullying is NOT cool!

If it's hard for you to speak out against bullying on your own, ask a friend to do it with you.

You help to make the world a better place by doing your part to stop bullying and remember—**bullying back doesn't help!**

RESOURCES

Access these internet sites for more information to help safeguard your children from bullying.

www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org
www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov
www.library.thinkquest.org
www.antibullying.net
www.melissainstitute.org
www.urbanext.uiuc.edu
www.pta.org
www.bullyingprevention.org



How To Protect Your Children

Parents remain on the front line when protecting their children. Listed below you will find some tips that will help to ensure your child's safety.

- ✓ Learn about the new technologies. If you are unfamiliar with the Internet, now is the time to start surfing the web. Learn the many ways that children can bully electronically - through instant messages, emails, blogs and social websites.
- ✓ Talk about values. Technology may have advanced, but kindness and decency should still be priorities for everyone.
- ✓ Talk to your child if you believe he or she is the victim of bullying. Children who are being victimized are often too embarrassed to tell a parent or teacher. Make sure your child knows that he or she is not to blame for being targeted and that they should always report any incident of bullying.
- ✓ Guard all passwords. A bully can use another child's screen name to send out offensive emails. Tell your child not to share passwords with friends.
- ✓ Stress the Internet's impact. An email sent to one child can be forwarded to hundreds. Emails and instant messages can resurface and can get a well-intentioned child in trouble. Encourage your child to "think before clicking".