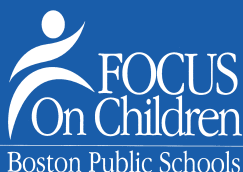




Bullying Prevention

A Guide for School Personnel and Parents



Dr. Carol R. Johnson
Superintendent

Boston Public Schools
26 Court St. | Boston, MA 02108-2528
www.bostonpublicschools.org | 617-635-9000



What is this Guide?

In May 2010, Massachusetts passed the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Law. It defines our legal responsibility and provides an opportunity for Boston Public Schools to enhance our efforts to prevent and stop bullying. Parents and school personnel must work together to ensure that every student comes to school safe and ready to learn.



This guide will prepare parents, guardians, and school personnel to talk with students about bullying. It also provides some strategies for responding effectively.

Working together, parents and school personnel can help create a bullying-free environment for all our students.

If you have questions about this guide or to report bullying, call the Boston Public Schools hotline: 617-592-2378.



What is Bullying?

Bullying is a form of emotional or physical abuse that has three defining characteristics:

1. **Deliberate:** A bully's intention is to hurt someone.
2. **Repeated:** A bully often targets the same victim again and again.
3. **Power imbalanced:** A bully chooses victims he or she perceives as vulnerable.

Bullying is different from conflict, fights, or disagreements. It must meet the above criteria.

It causes great harm!

It is not acceptable!

It is against the law!



Warning Signs of Bullying

When children are bullied, they may have difficulty communicating, or be unable to express, what's happened. Many students are afraid or embarrassed to tell. Some students think adults will not be able to help.

It's important to pay careful attention to the warning signs of bullying.

Warning signs of bullying include:

- Dislike of school or refusal to go to school
- Stomachaches, or other physical complaints
- Problems with eating and sleeping
- Unexplained damage or loss of clothing and other personal items
- Evidence of physical abuse, such as bruises and scratches
- Negative self-talk, self-harm, or loss of confidence
- Loss of friends or changes in friends
- Sudden (negative) change in behavior
- Depression, anxiety, fear, or panic
- Risky behavior, bullying others, aggression



What School Personnel Can Do

- Review the Boston Public School's state-mandated plan to prevent bullying, respond to bullying incidents, and train staff.
- Monitor hallways, playgrounds, cafeterias, bathrooms, and buses.
- Implement age-appropriate bullying prevention curricula.
- Embed bullying prevention messages into your everyday lessons.
- Create a classroom and school culture of respect, acceptance, kindness, and cooperation.
- Intervene immediately when you see or hear about bullying.
- Report bullying immediately to administrators.
- Provide counseling and social skills training for students who bully.
- Teach students what to do if they are bullied or witness bullying.
- Involve families by communicating regularly and including them in bullying prevention activities.
- For students with disabilities, include bullying prevention in the student's IEP or 504 Plan.
- Create a bullying-free environment in your classroom and school.



What Parents Can Do

If you suspect your child is being bullied, talk with your child and then speak with his or her teachers or principal.

When you talk with your child:

- Tell your child that reporting is important and telling is not *tattling*.
- Tell or show your child that this is not his or her fault.
- Ask for details, listen carefully, and watch your child's response.



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- If there are physical signs (torn clothes, bruises), take pictures.
- Stay focused on your child and make him or her feel safe.
- Write down what your child tells or shows you.
- Help your child understand what bullying is and what to do to prevent and stop it.
- Get help from school administrators and professionals if needed.

Listen, write it down, and get help.

When you talk with your child's school:

- Talk to your child's teachers and the principal about the bullying.
- Be specific about where and when the bullying took place.
- Ask about the bullying prevention and intervention plan for your child's school.



Created for the Boston Public Schools by the Bullying Prevention and Research Institute

Kim Storey, EdD; Ron Slaby, PhD; and Ed Donnelly, MEd

With assistance from Patricia Cameron, Kimberly Dash, and Susana Valverde

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Resources

Boston Public Schools Anti-Bullying Resources:
www.bostonpublicschools.org/antibullying

Eyes on Bullying:
www.eyesonbullying.org

