

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment happens when a person who has more power or some advantage (bigger, more status, etc.) repeatedly tries to bother, hurt, make fun of, or attack another person (it is not an accident). Sometimes several students will bully or harass another student or group of students.

Bullying can be verbal, physical, or relational, and may include taunting, physical acts of aggression, and social isolation. It may also include threats of violence, sexual harassment, cyber bullying, destruction of property, and actions meant to humiliate or embarrass.

Why is bullying a problem?

About one in five children are bullied regularly in Canada, often on school grounds. Most cases of bullying are witnessed by others. The repetitive nature of bullying can lead to a sense of fear in the one who is bullied, and may lead to emotional problems, school failure, and violence. The psychological and social impacts include anxiety, insomnia, depression, low self-esteem, skipping or avoiding school, humiliation, fear, increased risk of suicide, or other self-destructive behaviours. Those who witness bullying may also become intimidated and fearful that it will occur to them.

Students who bully others may develop a distorted self image, and learn to use aggression as a way to get power. They are at a higher risk for poor mental health, dropping out of school, criminal involvement, and developing irregular employment patterns. In fact, those who learn to bully others by 8 years of age are six times more likely to have a criminal conviction by the age of 24, including aggression in adulthood in the form of child and spousal abuse.

Bullying creates a toxic social environment that interferes with learning outcomes, health, and well-being. This behaviour can be difficult to change. Therefore, addressing it clearly, consistently, and from an early age is important.

BC Centre for Safe Schools & Communities
2007 Safe School Social Responsibility Survey for Secondary Students:

-Verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying - 57% of students reported being verbally bullied at least once in the school year.

The next most common forms of bullying were: social bullying (46%), physical bullying (30%), and cyber bullying (13%).

-55% of females were victims of social bullying, compared to 45% of males

-Grade 8 and 9 students reported the highest incident of being physically bullied (33% within each grade), while Grade 12 students had the lowest rates (26%)

-6% of the general student population surveyed did not feel safe at school. Among those who were physically bullied, 11% did not feel safe at school.



Services for Youth Affected by Bullying

BC Crisis Line:
1.866.661.3311 or
604.872.3311
www.crisiscentre.bc.ca

Cybertip:
1.866.663.9122
www.cybertip.ca

Safe Kids Help Line:
310.1234 (no area code
required) or
1.800.663.9122

Victims Info Line:
1.800.224.7233

Youth Against Violence:
1.800.680.4264

Youth Online Chat:
www.youthinbc.com

BC Centre for Safe Schools and Communities

33844 King Road
Abbotsford, BC
V2S 7M8

604.870.5936
1.888.224.7233
Fax: 604.870.5927

www.bccssc.ca

What can adults do to prevent bullying among youth?

1. Teach and model respectful behaviour at all times.
2. Help your child learn appropriate ways of showing anger.
3. Make time to talk with your children about what is happening at school.
4. Teach your children that applauding a bully or standing by is wrong. Remind them to report bullying to a trusted adult.
5. Help children to know how to express their concerns to adults, and let them know that they will be taken seriously.
6. Become knowledgeable about the bullying and harassment policy in the school. If there is no program, offer to form a group to begin this process.

What can schools do to prevent bullying?

Although many schools have developed anti-bullying programs and policies, [The Assessment Toolkit for Bullying, Harassment, and Peer Relations at School](#) aims to achieve consistency in these efforts through identification and implementation of common standards, best practices, and ongoing evaluation of anti-bullying programs. [The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program \(OBPP\)](#), one of the best known and most researched bullying prevention programs, seeks to reduce existing bullying problems, prevent the development of new bullying behaviors, and attain more positive peer relations at school. [The Fourth R](#), developed at the University of Western Ontario, targets adolescent risk-taking behavior through three units: relationship safety, sexual health, and substance use/abuse. Training is fully funded and targeted for secondary teachers in Planning Ten, and Aboriginal or Alternative Education programs. [Roots of Empathy](#), an evidence-based classroom program designed for grades K – 8, seeks to reduce aggression by developing empathy and social/emotional competence.

CSSC Resources

- Call for assistance, referral or research services 1-888-224-7233
- CSSC Library On-line Catalogue – for ordering resources, [click here](#)
- CSSC Speakers Bureau – for training and workshops, [click here](#)
- CSSC Resource Sheet, [click here](#).