

Early Signs of Bullying

Look for changes in the child; however, be aware that not all children who are bullied exhibit warning signs.

Some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Unexplainable injuries.
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry.
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick, or faking illness.
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares.
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school.
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations.
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem.
- Self-destructive behaviors, such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide.

Cyberbullying victims experience the same negative effects (i.e., low self-esteem, depression, anger, school failure, avoidance, and in some cases, school violence or suicide) as those bullied “offline” but often to a much larger degree, since messages can be made public online for an unlimited audience to view.



Hernando County Sheriff's Office
P.O. Box 10070
Brooksville, FL 34603-0070
Phone: 352-754-6830

www.hernandosheriff.org

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**Hernando County
Sheriff's Office**
Al Nienhuis, Sheriff



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Telephone: (352) 754-6830
Fax: (352) 796-0493
www.hernandosheriff.org

What is School Bullying?

School bullying is an unwelcome behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- A difference in power: Kids who bully use their physical strength or popularity to control or harm others.
- Repetition: happening more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

School Bullying is a type of bullying that takes place in an educational setting.

Bullying can be physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional in nature.

Recent statistics suggests that the majority of students will experience bullying at some point in their academic careers.

The long term effects of bullying are numerous, and can include sensitivity, anxiety, and depression. It is important for teachers and parents to understand and recognize the signs of bullying (of both bullies and victims) and to be equipped with strategies and tools to address bullying in schools.

Anti-bullying Advice for Parents

LOOK: Bullying happens in the shadows, when no adult is watching or listening. Look out for signs that your child may feel afraid or sad; maybe she/he is a bullying victim.

QUESTION: Ask lots of questions. What does your child think of other kids at school? Is your child feeling angry or afraid at school? What is happening that makes them feel this way?

LISTEN: Good listening skills are important. Adult attention can help stop bullying. Listen to your child's answers carefully without making him or her feel threatened.

HELP: After listening carefully, talk to your child calmly. Explain why bullying is a problem. Ask how you can help them.

THINK: After your talk, spend some time thinking about what's happening with your child. What other advice can you give them that will help stop bullying. Make sure it will prevent further violence.

SEEK: You may need to seek outside help. If needed, speak to teachers, guidance counselors, school resource officers, or other parents.



5 Ways to Bully-Proof Your Kid

1. **Talk about it.** If you need help, please don't be afraid to ask someone! Go to a teacher, principal, parent, guardian, or school resource officer for help!
2. **Remove the bait.** If it's lunch money or a gadget that the bully is after, pack your lunch or go to school gadget FREE.
3. **Buddy up for safety.** Two or more friends standing at their lockers are less likely to be picked on than someone who is all alone.
4. **Keep calm and carry on.** If a bully strikes, a kid's best defense may be to remain calm, ignore hurtful remarks, tell the bully to STOP, and simply walk away.
5. **Don't try to fight the battle yourself.** Sometimes talking to a bully's parents can be constructive, but it's generally best to do so in a setting where a school official, such as a counselor, can mediate.