

# RAYMORE -PECULIAR EAST MIDDLE SCHOOL BULLY PREVENTION TOOLKIT



With ignorance comes fear – from fear comes bigotry. Education is the key to acceptance.  
--Kathleen Patel

**RESOURCES FOR PARENTS, EDUCATORS, AND STUDENTS**

# RPEMS VISION AND MISSION



## VISION STATEMENT

Raymore-Peculiar East Middle School will provide an engaging environment that supports learning. We foster a climate that embraces the uniqueness of middle-level learners in a diverse culture while promoting an interdependent community that is environmentally responsible.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Partners in Learning

# WHAT IS BULLYING?



**Bullying is deliberate and hurtful behavior meant to belittle, frighten, hurt, or exclude someone. Bullying usually does not happen just once. It continues to happen over and over.**

## It is Bullying if:

- One person is hurting or harming another with words or behavior
- It is being done intentionally
- The person being hurt has a hard time defending themselves from the behavior
- The person who is doing it has more power\*

\* “Power” can include such things as being older, being physically bigger or stronger, having more social status, or when a group “gangs up” on someone.

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## Types of Bullying

**Social and Emotional bullying** occurs when the target loses acceptance or credibility in front of their peers or others because of the actions of another. **It may involve public humiliation and embarrassment, spreading rumors, or manipulation through the use of social status.** It can take the form of shunning, hazing, spreading rumors, excluding others or teasing.

**Verbal bullying** occurs when someone uses language to gain power over his or her peers. **The verbal bully makes use of relentless insults and teasing to bully his or her target.**

**Physical bullying** is perhaps the most widely recognized form of bullying. **Typically, the behavior is overt, and involves actions such as hitting, kicking, pinching, shoving and tripping.**

**Cyberbullying** is a form of bullying that involves the use of technology. According to Hinduja and Patchin, cyber bullying is, **“Willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.”**

# BULLYING VS. CONFLICT



Not all aggressive behavior is bullying. At times, students will be involved in horseplay which may appear aggressive.

**Horseplay** is a behavior that serves to reinforce positive peer relationships and takes place between peers of equal standing. In contrast, **Conflict** or **fighting** is meant to be hurtful and takes place between peers of relatively equal power or social standing. **Bullying** is meant to inflict harm and takes place between peers of unequal power or social standing.

*Children who are bullied cannot stop the bullying on their own. They need the support of others to ensure that the bullying does not continue.*

## IS IT BULLYING, FIGHTING

HORSEPLAY	FIGHTING	BULLYING
Usually with friends; often repeated (same players)	Usually not with friends; typically not repeated	Typically not friends; generally repeated
Relatively equal balance of power	Relatively equal balance of power	Unequal balance of power
No intent to harm	Intentional harm-doing	Intentional harm-doing
Mood is friendly, positive, mutual	Mood is negative, aggressive or tense; mutual hostile feelings	Mood is negative, mood/response differs for target and aggressor

Olweus, D (1993) *Bullying at School: What we know and what we can do* MA: Blackwell Press.

# WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT BULLYING?



Students who are *targets* are more likely to have:

- Anxiety or depression
- Suicidal ideations
- Low self-esteem
- Higher absenteeism
- Lower grades

Students who are *bystanders* to bullying are more likely to feel:

- Afraid to respond or to become the next target
- Powerless to change things
- Guilt for not responding
- Reduced empathy for targets

Students who *bully* are more likely to:

- Be injured in a fight
- Drink alcohol or smoke
- Engage in other antisocial behaviors
- Be truant or drop out of school

## WHY IT MATTERS

- Almost 1 in 3 students are involved in bullying, either as a bully, target, or bystander.
- About 20% of students report that they have been victimized by on line bullying.
- About 10% of students are afraid during the school day.
- Each school day, 160,000 students in the US stay home because of bullying.
- Students who are bullied may have lower self-esteem, increased fear and anxiety, depression, lower grades and even suicidal thoughts.
- It's not just the target who suffers. Students who bully have a greater risk of getting in trouble with the law. By age 25, one in four who have bullied will have spent time in jail.
- Bystanders of bullying experience feelings of guilt, fear and desire to help but don't know how.

Shore, K. (2011). *An educator's guide to bully prevention*.

**IT IS EVERY STUDENT'S RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE AND BE SAFE WHILE AT SCHOOL.**

## Common Characteristics of kids who bully

- A bully has the need to feel power and control.
- A bully has the need for attention.
- A bully has the need to feel superior to others.
- A bully lacks empathy.
- A bully is quick to feel anger and aggression.
- A bully enjoys inflicting pain and suffering on others.

*Contrary to popular opinion, most kids who bully see themselves in a positive light. This is generally because they have very little awareness of what others truly think of them. Other kids do not want to risk the bully's wrath by telling them what they truly think, therefore the student who bullies' confidence is falsely inflated.*

*(Netplaces.com, Dealing-with -bullies)*

## RISK FACTORS FOR BULLYING

### Family Risk Factors:

- A lack of warmth and involvement on the part of parents
- Overly-permissive parenting
- A lack of supervision by parents
- Harsh, physical discipline
- Parent modeling of bullying behavior
- Victimization by older siblings

### Peer Risk Factors:

- Friends who bully
- Friends who have positive attitudes about violence
- Some aggressive children who take on high status roles may use bullying as a way to enhance their social power.
- Some children with low social status may use bullying as a way to deflect taunting and aggression that is directed towards them, or to enhance their social position with higher status peers.

# THE ROLE OF THE BYSTANDER



**“THERE ARE NO INNOCENT BYSTANDERS”**  
**-WILLIAM BURROUGHS**

Dan Olweus, PhD., of the University of Bergen, Norway, one of the world's leading researchers on bullying , indicates who these 'not-so-innocent' bystanders are:

***Followers/Henchmen*** – take an active part but do not start the bullying

***Supporters: Passive Bully/Bullies*** – support the bullying but do not take an active part

***Passive Supporters: Possible Bully/Bullies*** – like the bullying but do not display open support

***Disengaged Onlookers*** – watch what happens; say, “It is none of my business”; don't take a stand

***Possible Defenders*** - dislike the bullying and think they ought to help out but don't do it

***Defenders of the Target*** – dislike the bullying and help or try to help the target

## How To Be More Than A Bystander

1. Don't give the bully and audience.
2. Set a good example.
3. Help them get away.
4. Tell a trusted adult.
5. Be their friend.

## 9 Reasons the Bystander Will Side With the Bully

1. The bully is my friend.
2. It is not my problem.
3. The Target is not my friend.
4. The target is a loser.
5. The target deserved to be bullied.
6. Bullying will toughen up the target.
7. Kids have a deeply embedded code of silence.
8. It is better to be in the in-group than to be an outcast.
9. It is too complicated, risky, difficult or painful.

# WHAT STRATEGIES DO KIDS FIND MOST HELPFUL?



Students who witness bullying or are bullied themselves often don't know how to respond. They may have received ineffective advice from adults or friends in the past. They often worry about how their response will be acted on by the bully. Often times adults will suggest predictable strategies like ignore it, walk away, tell the person to stop. In a study by Nixon and Davis ([www.youthvoiceproject.com](http://www.youthvoiceproject.com)) students identified the most and least helpful strategies

## Most Helpful Strategies

- Told an adult at home
- Told a friend
- Made a joke out of it
- Told an adult at school
- Reminded myself that it was not my fault

## Least Helpful Strategies

- Hit or fought back
- Made a plan to get them back
- Told the person to stop
- Did nothing (ignored it)
- Told them how I felt

*This study indicated that the most helpful strategies are those that employ the help of others. Most students who are bullied do not benefit from being told to ignore the bully or to make assertive statements.*

# THE ROLE OF ADULTS



Adults play a significant role in keeping children safe from bullying. Whether you are a parent, family member, teacher, coach, community leader or a helping professional, you have a role to play in bully prevention and intervention.

## How Should Adults Help

### All Adults Should:

- Recognize the signs and symptoms of a child who may be bullied
- Intervene when bullying is suspected.
- Talk with students about what bullying is and isn't.
- Reinforce appropriate bystander behavior.
- Communicate, in a timely manner with supervising or responsible adults.

### Recognize Signs and symptoms of Bullying:

- Frequent absences from school
- Dropping grades or change in motivation towards school work
- Anxiety about school
- numerous visits to the school nurse
- No longer wanting to walk home or ride the school bus
- Avoids certain places
- Withdrawal from peers
- Appears sad, moody or angry after school
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams

## Start At Home by:

- Teaching self-control
- Communicating a zero tolerance of mistreatment of others
- Teach the Golden Rule
- Hold family meetings to teach empathy, sensitivity and values
- Discuss models of acceptance through news stories, TV shows, movies, etc.
- Teach your child to say "I'm sorry." Please forgive me." and then be kind to that person

## What should I do when I find out my child has bullied?

- Stay calm and discuss the events with your child.
- Work with school personnel to help change behaviors.
- Apply clear, fair and significant consequences.
- Teach your child that power can be experienced through doing good (e.g. service projects, helping others, correcting wrongs...).
- Explore reasons why your child is bullying others.
- Talk to your child about the importance of understanding the feelings of others. Ask your child how he or she would feel as the target of bullying.
- Supervise your child's activities. If your child is not already involved in sports or community activities, encourage him or her to hang out with children you know to be good role models.
- Immediately reinforce/reward positive behaviors.
- Help your child connect with peers who exhibit positive behaviors.
- Model the behavior you expect from your child.
- If needed, seek professional counseling for your child.



# TIPS FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO ARE BULLIED

Because students are in school for most of the day, they are more likely to be bullied at school than anywhere else. In addition to providing support to their child, parents should partner with the school to ensure that educators are aware of the bullying issue and responsive to the students' needs.

## Talk With Your Child

Explain what bullying is and why it is wrong. Let your child know that you are interested in helping them. Show empathy and encourage him or her to share thoughts and feelings. Help your child to understand that there is a lot they can do if they are being bullied:

- Know that they do not deserve what is happening.
- Tell someone: their parents, a teacher or trusted adult.
- Develop a plan about how they can respond to the situation.
- With the help of an adult, decide how other students can help.

## If You Suspect Your Child Is Being Bullied

- Do not blame your child.
- Do not tell your child to retaliate.
- Do not expect your child to work it out alone.
- Communicate with school staff.
- Identify an adult at school who has a connection with your child.

## How Students Should Respond to Bullying

- Keep cool. Avoid emotional or physical reaction in front of the bully.
- If possible, remove yourself from the situation.
- Tell a trusted adult and your parent(s).
- Speak up when bullying happens. If you are comfortable, say "Stop it," "That's not cool" or another assertive phrase.

# ADDRESSING CYBER BULLYING AT HOME



**Parents should be knowledgeable about current technologies and establish clear expectations for technology usage and safety.**

**Parents should teach children:**

- Not to give out personal information online.
- Not to share their personal password with anyone other than their parents.
- Not to join in when they witness online cruelty.
- Not to forward hurtful messages or pictures to others.

## IF YOUR CHILD EXPERIENCES CYBERBULLYING

Don't respond. Children who engage in cyberbullying activities are seeking a reaction from their target. Even if it seems warranted, do not respond out of anger.

Save the evidence. Save harmful messages and print a copy of web content. These hard copies of the evidence can aid authorities when they investigate the situation.

Immediately seek help from a trusted adult. It may be helpful for parents and children to identify, in advance, to whom their child will report concerns prior to any cyberbullying experiences.

Work with adults to ensure the person who engages in cyberbullying activities is held accountable. If the cyberbullying includes a direct threat to someone's physical safety, a police report may be warranted. If the cyberbullying occurs at school, is brought into class, or continues as face-to-face bullying during the school day, the bullying should be reported to school administrators.

Contact the technology host to request that offensive content be removed and cyberbullying blocked. Many technology companies accept abuse complaints via a web-portal on their site or through email.