

Other helpful resources

To learn more about bullying and what you can do to help the healing, contact your child's school or check out these resources:

Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6868
www.kidshelpphone.ca

Bully Hotline, Halifax Regional Police

Phone: 490-7283
Text: 233-SAVE
E-mail: bullyhotline@halifax.ca

Provincial School Code of Conduct

www.ednet.ns.ca/index.php?t=sub_ pages&cat=494

Safe Schools, Halifax Regional School Board

www.hrsb.ns.ca/safeschools

This brochure is available on the Halifax Regional School Board website, at www.hrsb.ns.ca/bullying

Halifax Regional School Board
Phone: 902.464.2000
Website: www.hrsb.ns.ca



**Halifax Regional
School Board**

Every Student Can Learn.
Every School Will Improve.

Bullying hurts: You can help the healing

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



Bullying hurts everyone—the victims, the bullies, and the whole community. As a parent, here's what to watch for, what you can do, and where you can get help.

What is bullying?

Bullying is intentional, hurtful and repeated behaviour that intimidates, threatens harm, or victimizes another person to make the victim feel weaker. It may be direct and open, or indirect and subtle. If it's intentional, hurtful and repeated, it's bullying, whether the act is:

- physical (such as hitting, shoving, or touching in an unwelcomed way).
- verbal (such as threatening, harassing, teasing, or insulting).
- social (such as excluding others from a group, or spreading gossip about them).
- electronic (such as hurtful text messages, e-mails, or other online abuses, which are sometimes called cyberbullying).

Why is it serious?

Bullying is painful and dangerous. It is never acceptable. Research shows that bullying can cause deep harm, and that it can have serious long-term effects.

The problem may be more widespread than you think. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, one-third of students experience bullying at school, and almost one-third report having bullied someone else.

How can I tell if my child is being bullied?

Victims often keep their problems a secret. They may feel they should handle it themselves. They may worry about revenge or other students' disapproval, or they may feel that adults can do little to help them.

These are some signs that your child may be the victim of a bully:

- a change in attitude, eating, or sleeping habits;
- fear of going to school or attending after-school programs;
- skipping classes;
- lowered self-esteem;
- unexplained sadness or depression;
- acting out at home;
- unexplained losses of money or personal items, or things that come home broken without a reason;
- unexplained bruises, injuries, or damaged clothes; and
- loss of interest in school, or a drop in achievement.

What can I do when my child is the victim?

- Listen carefully to what your child tells you about the bullying.
- Be sympathetic and take the problem seriously.
- Assure your child that it is not his or her fault.
- Tell your child that she or he will not have to face this alone.
- Discourage your child from getting revenge.
- Do not promise to keep it a secret. Anonymous reports are hard to fix.
- Tell the principal or a staff member.

Give your child the following advice:

- Walk away from the situation.
- Don't hit back, don't talk back, don't e-mail back.
- Tell an adult whom you trust – a teacher, the principal, the school bus driver, or the lunchroom supervisor.
- Talk about it with your family or friends so that you don't feel alone.
- Find a friend to be with in the places where you don't feel safe.

What if my child is the bully?

- Be alert to signs of bullying at home.
- Think about how your family deals with problems and conflicts.
- Tell your child that bullying is wrong, and that there are better ways to solve problems, manage feelings, and meet needs.
- Be a good role model. Practise how to face problems together without hurting others.
- Talk to your child's teacher or other staff at the school. They can help.

What if my child is a bystander?

Coach your child to do the following if he or she is a witness to bullying:

- Stay calm.
- Speak up.
- Get help.
- Support the victim.
- Refuse to join in any teasing or gossip.
- Do not be an audience for the bully.
- Show respect for all people.

What can I expect from the school?

- School staff will investigate your concerns.
- An adult your child trusts will support your child and help to solve the problem.
- The principal or other school staff will meet with you and your child.
- If more help is needed, the school will involve others, such as a Safe Schools Consultant or the School Administration Supervisor.

How is the school board helping to make our schools safer?

The Halifax Regional School Board is committed to ensuring that every school is a safe place to learn and succeed. We put this commitment into action through our policies, procedures, staff development, and school supports. For example:

- The Regional Code of Conduct (Policy B.013) sets the standard for conduct in our schools. It declares that “it is the right of all students and staff to learn, teach, work and interact in a safe, secure and healthy environment, free from any form of violence, intimidation, threat, abuse or mistreatment.” Find out more at the board website (www.hrsb.ns.ca/files/Downloads/pdf/board/policy/sectionB/B.013-code-of-conduct.pdf).
- Safe Schools, a division of the School Administration Department, offers training, resources, and individual support to help

students find peaceful solutions to conflict. Find out more at the board website (www.hrsb.ns.ca/safeschools).

- Positive Effective Behaviour Supports (PEBS) is an approach adopted by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and practised in our schools. The PEBS approach involves:
 - defining the standards of behaviour for all students;
 - teaching students how to meet the standards; and
 - supporting students when they need extra help to act responsibly and reach their potential.

Your child's school may also have developed other ways to promote safety and respect. Talk to the teachers or principal to find out more.

Speak Up!
If you're bullied,
or you see bullying,
tell an adult you
trust.

**Bullying hurts
everyone – the victims,
the bullies, and the
whole community.**