

BULLYING- What Can Parents Do?



OCPS BULLYING POLICY DEFINITIONS:

Bullying- *unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture that inflicts physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more people*

Harassment- *any written, verbal, physical conduct, or use of the computer that is threatening, insulting or dehumanizing that places someone in reasonable fear of harm or interferes with the educational setting.*

Cyber bullying /cyber stalking- *communicating words, images, or language through electronic devices that causes substantial emotional distress to a person and serves no legitimate purpose. s. 784.048(1)(d), F.S.*

UNIVERSAL BULLYING DEFINITIONS

Bullying is when one or more students repeatedly say or do mean or hurtful things to another student, on purpose.

Bullying implies an imbalance in power or strength (size, popularity, athletic ability, etc.) The student who is bullied often has difficulty defending himself/herself.

TYPES OF BULLYING

- Physical-Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting or getting someone else to do it
- Verbal-Taunting, teasing, racial slurs, sexual harassment, spreading rumours, gossip
- Non-verbal-Threatening, obscene or mean gestures; deliberate exclusion
- Cyber Bullying-Using information and communication technology such as the internet or text messages to hurt others
- Relational Bullying-Targets relationships and social status to cause harm to peers.

TIPS for ALL PARENTS:

- ✓ Make sure that your child knows the difference between bullying, which is repeated, intentional, hurtful words or actions and conflict or fights with peers.
- ✓ Help your child learn how to stand up for him/herself and stand up for and support others when they witness bullying.

IF YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

Be tuned in to warning signs:

- Fearful of going to school
- Sudden lack of interest in school and activities
- Drop in grades
- Unexplained sadness, fatigue, anger

What to do:

- Ask about friends, what goes on at school and to/from school.
- Truly listen to your child. Find out what he/she needs from you.
- Report concerns to the school and expect to get help.
- Do not blame your child or tell him/her to fight back.
- Help your child focus on his/her strengths.
- Encourage your child to spend time with friendly/nice/helpful students.
- Teach safety: walk with friends, stay near adults, avoid known bullies.
- Role play situations to practice what to do when bullied (use humor, assertive words, distractions)
- Encourage your child to ask for help from adults! Teach them the difference between tattling (done to get someone in trouble) and telling/reporting (done to get someone out of trouble or get help)

IF YOUR CHILD BULLIES OTHERS

Be tuned in to warning signs:

- Frequent physical/aggressive behavior towards others, such as, hitting, pushing.
- Hurtful verbal behavior towards others, such as, name calling, using put-downs, gossiping, spreading rumors.
- Excluding others from activities/telling not to be friends with others.

What to do:

- Tell your child that you will not tolerate bullying; bullying is very serious and hurtful behavior; there will be consequences.
- Monitor and supervise your child's behaviors, activities, and interactions.
- Know your child's friends.
- Model appropriate social behavior.
- Practice with your child appropriate ways to get his/her needs met.
- Focus on your child's strengths/gifts.
- Reinforce and encourage kind, friendly, positive behavior (The Golden Rule)
- Talk with the school and get professional support, if necessary.

Helpful websites: <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>; <http://www.pta.org/bullying.asp>