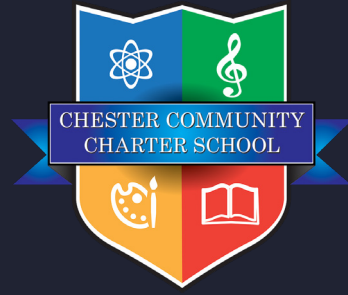




**InterACTT**  
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FOR CARE AND THREAT TEAMS



# Addressing Teasing and Bullying: A Guide for Parents





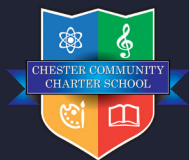
# Addressing Bullying and Teasing

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# Addressing Bullying and Teasing

## What Is Bullying<sup>1</sup>

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive 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. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

### Types of Bullying

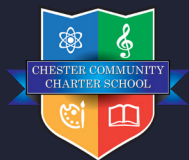
- **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
  - Teasing
  - Name-calling
  - Inappropriate sexual comments
  - Taunting
  - Threatening to cause harm
- **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
  - Leaving someone out on purpose
  - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
  - Spreading rumors about someone
  - Embarrassing someone in public
- **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
  - Hitting/kicking/pinching
  - Spitting
  - Tripping/pushing
  - Taking or breaking someone's things
  - Making mean or rude hand gestures

### Where and When Bullying Happens

Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places like on the playground or the bus. It can also happen traveling to or from school, in the youth's neighborhood, or on the Internet.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/what-is-bullying>



# Addressing Bullying and Teasing

## What Is Cyberbullying<sup>2</sup>

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok
- Text messaging and messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting over the internet
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards, such as Reddit
- Email
- Online gaming communities

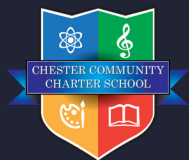
### Special Concerns

With the prevalence of social media and digital forums, comments, photos, posts, and content shared by individuals can often be viewed by strangers as well as acquaintances. The content an individual shares online – both their personal content as well as any negative, mean, or hurtful content – creates a kind of permanent public record of their views, activities, and behavior. This public record can be thought of as an online reputation, which may be accessible to schools, employers, colleges, clubs, and others who may be researching an individual now or in the future. Cyberbullying can harm the online reputations of everyone involved – not just the person being bullied, but those doing the bullying or participating in it. Cyberbullying has unique concerns in that it can be:

- **Persistent** – Digital devices offer an ability to immediately and continuously communicate 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for children experiencing cyberbullying to find relief.
- **Permanent** – Most information communicated electronically is permanent and public, if not reported and removed. A negative online reputation, including for those who bully, can impact college admissions, employment, and other areas of life.
- **Hard to Notice** – Because teachers and parents may not overhear or see cyberbullying taking place, it is harder to recognize.



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it>



# Addressing Bullying and Teasing

## Warning Signs for Bullying<sup>3</sup>

### Signs a Child is Being Bullied

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

If you know someone in serious distress or danger, don't ignore the problem. Get help right away.

### Signs a Child is Bullying Others

Kids may be bullying others if they:

- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Are increasingly aggressive
- Get sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently
- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blame others for their problems
- Don't accept responsibility for their actions
- Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/warning-signs>







# Addressing Bullying and Teasing

## How to Address Bullying

- Take a deep breath to help you remain calm
- Avoid talking to the person who bullied you while you were upset
- Take the time to think about what to do next
- If you have been threatened, talk to someone you trust – a teacher, a trusted adult, a family member, or a close friend
- If you don't feel safe, avoid being alone with the person who has bullied you
- If you must talk to the person who bullied you, use simple and direct language
- Don't try to get even or pay them back – this will only escalate the problem

### How to help a friend



#### LOOK

- Look around at
- Remain calm before running in to help
- Make sure it is safe for you to help



#### THINK

- Consider the context of what is occurring
- Identify how you can help without talking for or over your friend
- Think about other people and friends who can help



#### ACT

- Encourage them to avoid being alone with the person who is bullying them
- Let them know they didn't do anything to deserve this
- Spend time with your friend so they know you care

### If you are accused of being a bully:

- It's never ok to bully someone
- It doesn't matter what they said or did
- You are in control of your own behavior
- If someone is hurt by what you said, offer an apology
- If you aren't sure how to apologize, ask for help
- Let them know you will be more careful in the future



# Addressing Bullying and Teasing

## Bystander Empowerment

### Bystander Effect

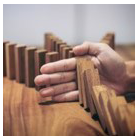
- The bystander effect describes how people are hesitant to help address a potentially dangerous situation.
- The larger the group witnessing an event, the more intense this effect becomes.
- People are more willing to help when others are already helping.

When behaviors occur that have the potential to harm others and the community, we need to:

- Recognize the situation as a problem
- Model helping behaviors to encourage others to help
- Remember – those who are asked to help are more likely to do so

### The Four Ds of Bystander Intervention

Getting involved as a bystander is another way to address sexual violence. If you see something inappropriate, hear a sexist comment, or are witnessing domestic violence consider the four Ds:



**Direct:** Here you directly ask them to stop the behavior and explain why it is problematic. Always be aware of your own safety in these situations.



**Distract:** Is there a way you can distract the person from engaging in the behavior? This could be knocking over a cup, turning the lights on and off quickly or interrupting and asking where you might know them from.



**Delegate:** Find someone else who can intervene in the situation, like another person at a party or a resident advisor.



**Delay:** If you can't intervene directly with the situation or distract or find someone to help, make sure to report the concern as soon as you are able.

Do something – tell the person why their behavior or comments are unacceptable or come to someone's aid if they appear vulnerable or at risk for being violated.