

# BULLYING STOPS HERE!

*A guide for parents to  
help their children*





Ministry of  
Education



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*Our Vision: To improve public education for all students  
by including and supporting parents.*



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## Introduction

Our schools should be safe and welcoming places, where students can learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, intolerance, discrimination and violence. We all play a role in helping to ensure our schools are safe places, and one way to do this is by working to prevent bullying among our children and youth.

This guide for parents outlines how we can work together to ensure our children are part of a safe and respectful school community. We can achieve this by:

- helping our children recognize when they are experiencing or participating in bullying,
- taking steps to end bullying by working with staff at schools and representatives of community-based organizations and
- improving our school's culture so that every student feels a sense of security, belonging and well-being.

Research shows that children who have been bullied or who have bullied others are at greater risk for emotional and social issues. That's why it's so important to intervene appropriately and quickly if we suspect that bullying is taking place.

This guide offers advice for parents whose children are the targets of bullying, as well as for parents of children who have witnessed bullying or who have bullied others. Our goal is to help you gain a deeper understanding of this complex issue and to suggest strategies for how you can work with your child and their school to come to a solution.

We hope that you find this guide to be a useful resource, giving you the tools you need to talk about bullying with your children and take action to seek a positive solution.

# What is bullying?

Bullying is unwelcome or aggressive behaviour that is repeated over time and that is meant to make others feel uncomfortable, humiliated, scared or hurt.

A person who bullies others takes advantage of their power over the person who is bullied. This power comes from the bully's physical size, strength, personality, status or support from their peers.

The target of bullying has less power because:

- the target's personality, age or size may make them stand out or seem different,
- the target may be new to a school or have a harder time making friends, or
- the target may be a single individual outnumbered by members of a large group.

Not all negative social interactions are bullying. A single incident, such as a fight, is not considered bullying. Disagreements and peer conflict are also not bullying, even if they escalate to insults or physical aggression like hitting or kicking.

## Verbal bullying

This is the most common form of bullying. It often focuses on the target's physical appearance, social relationships, or sexual identity and relationships. Verbal bullying makes use of recurring insults, hurtful jokes or unwanted comments to humiliate and shame. At its most extreme, verbal bullying crosses into criminal behaviour such as slander, extortion, hate speech or uttering threats.

## Physical bullying

This involves assaults or threats of assault (such as hitting, hair-pulling, pushing, biting or spitting) and the destruction of property. Serious assaults that result in injury are criminal offences and should be reported to both the school and the police.

## Social or relational bullying

This involves deliberately excluding someone socially or marginalizing them by shunning or excluding them from groups and events.



## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying uses social media and other Internet technologies to attack and insult targets, often aiming to destroy personal reputations.

"Sexting" involves the exchange of intimate photographs; it is a form of cyberbullying when the subject of the photographs does not control who sees them. Sexting is also illegal if the material is deemed to be pornographic – that is, if it shows sexual images of a youth under the age of 18.

## When bullying crosses into illegal activity

Some forms of bullying may be illegal. A young person who is kicked or beaten is the victim of an assault, which is a criminal offence. Someone who shares sexual images of another child or youth may be found guilty of distributing child pornography. Depending on the severity of the bullying, the police may need to be involved.

## Who bullies?

There are a range of motivations and traits that explain why some individuals bully others. Some individuals might be very confident, while others struggle to form friendships.

Bullying can start at an early age, even among two- or three-year-olds. Recent research suggests that boys and girls bully at about the same rate, although the type of bullying behaviour can differ.

## When an adult is the bully

People of all ages – including adults – can be bullies. Your child may be bullied by an adult authority figure, such as a teacher or school staff member.

If you are concerned that your child is being targeted by a teacher or school staff member, you should speak directly with the person or contact the principal or vice-principal at the school.

The school district will have policies and processes to address your concerns about a staff member. In some circumstances you may feel the need to take your concern to someone within the district administration. You can also make a complaint to the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation about the "conduct or competence" of anyone who holds a BC Teacher's Certificate.

## Puppetmasters

Sometimes an individual who exhibits bullying behaviour is actually being controlled by someone else, called a "puppetmaster." Although the aggressor may appear to be acting alone, he or she is actually being controlled and manipulated by the puppetmaster, sometimes without realizing it. From the outside, the puppetmaster does not appear to be involved in the situation. The actions of a puppetmaster may perpetuate bullying behaviours even when a single aggressor is stopped.

## Examples of bullying

### Verbal

- name-calling
- unwelcome comments
- taunting
- spreading rumours, gossiping
- racist or homophobic comments

### Physical

- slapping, hitting, pinching, punching, kicking
- locking in a confined space
- unwelcome touching or constant poking
- extortion

### Social

- excluding from a group or from conversations
- eye-rolling or other facial expressions meant to provoke
- threatening or insulting graffiti
- threatening notes, letters, emails or telephone calls
- threatening words, actions or weapons

### Cyberbullying

- cyberstalking and harassing – sending messages to frighten, insult or threaten the other person
- impersonating – pretending to be the victim online, stealing another person's password and changing their online profile
- creating a website that deliberately embarrasses or insults the victim or that includes personal information and photos of the victim
- sending photos (either real or manipulated) of the victim, often in nude or compromising situations

## Who is bullied?

Anyone can be a target of bullying behaviour. It is important to remember that children who are bullied are not responsible for being bullied or victimized.

Bullying often targets individual differences such as physical appearance, culture, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity. Children who have a minority status in a school community or whose appearance or behaviour is less conventional may be targets of bullying.

Compared with other children, children with special needs may be less able to defend themselves, act assertively or get help from others. Students who have more difficulty reading social cues may also be more vulnerable to bullying.

Sexualized bullying and harassment are more frequently directed at girls, and at both girls and boys whose gender identities or sexual orientation appear to differ from the majority. Sexual insults often flourish online in social media environments.

## What are some signs of bullying?

Some children will let their parents, friends or school staff members know that they are being bullied. Others may be afraid or ashamed to come forward. Children often fear that the bullying will get worse if they tell others about what is going

on. They may have been threatened with further harm if they report the bullying to an adult.

You know your child best. Changes in their behaviour, appetite, physical well-being and relationships with others could indicate that there is a problem at school.

Children who are being bullied may:

- avoid school, say they are ill, leave school early or skip certain classes,
- complain of recurring physical symptoms, such as stomach aches, that don't seem to have a medical cause,
- have disrupted sleeping or eating habits,
- show signs of depression (extreme tiredness, sadness, loneliness and social isolation) or anxiety, including the desire to avoid particular situations,
- start acting aggressively towards siblings or family members,
- lose interest in favourite activities and close friends,
- come home with inexplicably damaged or missing clothing or belongings,
- seem distressed after phone, text or social media contact with others or
- express the intent to harm themselves or voice suicidal thoughts and the desire to escape their lives.

If you notice these types of changes in your child's behaviour, you should try to learn more about what is going on.

## What can parents do?

Our children have the right to be emotionally and physically safe. If you suspect that your child is being bullied, it's important to investigate these concerns early, before the situation gets worse.

Although it can be hard to talk about bullying, we need to talk about this subject with our children. As a parent, modelling open communication will make it more likely that your child will feel comfortable talking to you about difficult things.

Children may be reluctant to tell you about bullying, and they might not even recognize that they are the target of bullying behaviour. Your child may feel anxious telling you what is happening, particularly if the bullying involves sexual teasing.





Children are often uncomfortable telling others that they are being bullied because they may think that:

- they will suffer retaliation,
- the problem isn't that bad,
- they can handle the problem themselves,
- they are weak and can't defend themselves,
- they do not want to be seen as "ratting,"
- the situation will get worse,
- they will not be protected or
- the bullying is their fault.

### Ask open-ended questions

If you suspect that your child is being bullied, ask open-ended questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" response. Sometimes, approaching the topic indirectly can be a good way to learn about what is happening. Some questions include:

- What's happening at school these days? What do you like? Anything you don't like?
- Who do you hang out with at lunch and after school?
- Have you seen anyone at your school being bullied? What happened?

Follow-up questions like 'can you tell me more about that?' can be very helpful. Children will talk about bullying when they know they will be heard – that you will listen and help. Try not to overreact and never blame your child if they share information that makes you feel frightened or angry. Listen carefully and be supportive.

If your child is bullying others – or has been both a target and a perpetrator of bullying – they may be very defensive and want to minimize their responsibility. Bullying events are often complex, and it is important to take the time to understand the situation fully.

For example, a child who has been persistently bullied may turn on his or her aggressor and subsequently be defined by adults as the only guilty party. Each situation must be understood fully before deciding on a course of action.

### Gather information about the bullying incidents

If you discover that your child is being bullied, you may want to ask him or her some questions about what has happened. The following questions are a good starting point:

- How are you feeling?
- Who was present when the incident happened? Did any other students or adults see what happened? Did anyone help you?
- Who did you tell at school? How did they respond?
- Can you tell me about any other incidents that have occurred?
- How can I help you handle this situation?
- Who else do you think might be able to help?

Many children and youth are reluctant to talk about bullying incidents and may minimize the severity of the situation. More than one conversation may be needed. The **Bullying Stops Here Logbook** can help you gather a more complete picture of what has been happening.

### Respond calmly and reassure your child

Children are often reluctant to report bullying. They may be concerned that adults will intervene and make the situation worse. They



## What is peer conflict?

Peer conflict is not bullying. Although it might look like bullying in some circumstances, it usually happens between young people who:

- normally choose to play or spend time together,
- have equal physical or social power,
- are equally upset,
- are both interested in resolving the conflict or
- will be able to work things out and re-establish their relationship, perhaps after calming down or with some adult assistance.

may be ashamed to share information with you if they think you will disapprove of their actions. The best strategy is to stay calm and offer your child assistance and support.

You may be tempted to contact the parents of the child or children who have targeted your child. This is not a good idea unless you have a strong relationship with the parents and believe you can work collaboratively with them to solve the problems.

It is usually a better idea to talk with school teachers or administrators and, if need be, have them work with all involved to resolve the situation.

Targets of bullies may feel there is something wrong with them that has led to the bullying. Your child will need to hear that the bullying is not their fault. They may also fear retaliation. Let your child know that you will work with staff at their school to keep them safe.

## Take action

Children who are bullied have often tried many ways to deal with the problem. While it is important to listen to your child and help them come up with solutions, it is not enough to then send your child back to school to handle the situation alone. Your intervention, by contacting and working with the school, will help achieve a long-term positive resolution.

The course of action you take will depend on the severity of the situation, the age of your child and other factors. As you listen and talk with your child, consider the following questions when deciding how involved you will be:

- What information do I need?
- Does my child need my help or protection?
- How can I help my child stay safe?
- Where can I go for help?

As adults, we have a responsibility to ensure that incidents of bullying are reported and actions are taken. If nothing is done, those involved (directly or indirectly) may conclude that the behaviour is acceptable, and as a result, the problem may get worse. All schools have a Code of Conduct that outlines acceptable actions and behaviours and responses to unacceptable conduct.

# Working with your child's school to resolve the issue

## Contact the school

Whether your child is a target, a bystander or is engaged in bullying, you will want to contact the school or school district to inform them of what is happening and get their help to positively resolve the problem.

Start by contacting the appropriate school staff member and reporting the situation. Schools will typically have staff members who have received training in identifying and addressing bullying behaviours.

### When to contact the teacher

If the problem occurs in an area supervised by the teacher, such as in the classroom or a gym change room, you should contact your child's teacher. At the elementary level, the classroom teacher will likely have a strong sense of your child's relationship to his or her peer group. At the secondary level, teachers may or may not have this same insight into the dynamics of your child's social relationships. You can contact a teacher or school counsellor as a first step.

If the teacher is not receptive to your concerns or seems uncertain about the best course of action, ask to speak with a member of the school's administrative team, such as a vice-principal or principal.

### When to contact the principal or vice-principal

Contact the school administration (principal or vice-principal) if the problem occurs on the playground, in the hallway, at lockers, at the bus stop, during extracurricular school activities, on the way to or from school or if the problem persists in the classroom.

## Before you meet with the school

You may want to visit the BCCPAC's website, [bccpac.bc.ca](http://bccpac.bc.ca), and review the online conflict resolution resources for background information.

Before you meet with a teacher or administrator at your child's school, you should:

- Review the district and school policies and Code of Conduct to understand how the school addresses bullying and other behaviour issues. Start with the Code of Conduct, which is usually found on the school website.
- Summarize your concerns over the phone or in writing when you are requesting a meeting.
- Ask for sufficient meeting time so you will not be rushed.
- Decide whether your child should be present for the meeting. While it may not be appropriate for a young child

## Helping your child resolve peer conflict

If it seems that your child is experiencing peer conflict rather than bullying, you can help your child identify how their behaviour may have contributed to the situation.

Conflict between and among peers is a natural part of growing up. Children will have times when they disagree and can't solve their own problems. They may even become so frustrated that they say mean things or act out physically by hitting, kicking or trying to hurt others.

How can you tell if the situation in question is one of peer conflict? Some signs are that the children involved:

- usually choose to play or hang out together,
- have equal power (similar age, size, social status, etc.),
- are equally upset,
- are both interested in the outcome and
- will be able to work things out with adult help (after calming down).

Adults can respond by helping the children talk it out and see each other's perspective. This is often referred to as "conflict resolution."

to be present during some discussions, having your child at the meeting can help them feel empowered, knowing that they are advocating for themselves.

- Write down as many details as possible about the situation. Check with your child to make sure this written information is accurate, comprehensive and includes all relevant details of the incidents. Use the **Bullying Stops Here Logbook** to help record your information.

## When you meet with the school

You may feel anxious about meeting with the school because of your concern for your child's well-being. You can help achieve a positive resolution by approaching the school in a spirit of co-operation. You, as the parent, and the school both have important roles to play as you work together in your child's best interest.

When meeting with staff at the school, you may want to ask the following questions:

- Do you think the school's policy on bullying prevention applies to this case?
- What steps will you take to investigate the incident?
- Can you investigate the bullying confidentially, without revealing that my child has reported another student?
- How will you work to ensure that my child will not be retaliated against for reporting the bullying?
- How can we stop my child from being targeted? (Some solutions could include physically separating your child from the child who is bullying if it's feasible to move students into a new class or to adjust timetables.)

- Who should my child contact at school if he or she needs to report further incidents?
- If the bullying continues – or worsens – what should we do? Who else in the school system can help us?

During the meeting, it's a good idea to have someone record details about your discussion with the school and any agreed-upon actions that arise from the meeting. You can have someone attend the meeting with you to record this information, and you may want to use the **Bullying Stops Here Logbook** included within this guide.

The school may decide to conduct an investigation into the bullying incident(s). You and your child may request (and will want to request in more serious cases):

- a person of your choice to accompany you to all meetings, including interviews,
- information on how and by whom a school-based investigation will be conducted and how it will be kept confidential and
- a recording or transcript of the interview or written statement if your child is interviewed by an investigator.

Remember that the school will need time to investigate your child's concerns and to contact others who may have valuable information about the issue. Ask to be updated, but keep in mind that school staff may not be able to share the details of their conversations with other students or parents due to privacy requirements.





Depending on the circumstances, you can also request:

- A plan of action to prevent further bullying of your child and others.
- Appropriate counselling for your child to deal with the effects of the bullying.
- Information about outside agencies (such as the police or mental health counsellors) if a referral is appropriate.
- A transfer for your child to another school, if the fear of bullying is preventing your child from attending school.

## PLAN *of* ACTION

### ERASE Bullying website

Children and youth can report bullying on the ERASE Bullying website. An online reporting tool, at [reportbullyingbc.ca](http://reportbullyingbc.ca), allows students to report bullying. Reports are reviewed daily during the school year by a district Safe Schools Coordinator who will then work with district staff to address specific situations.

### If you need more help

If you are concerned that the teacher or administrator is not acting on your concerns in a timely or appropriate manner, you can take your concerns to the next level of authority in the school district.

All school districts have complaint policies and processes. If you feel that the school is not fully addressing the safety needs of your child, you can contact the district's:

- Safe Schools Coordinator,
- the Associate Superintendent who is responsible for your child's school or
- the district's Superintendent.

Use the **Bullying Stops Here Logbook** to document your actions and the steps that were taken (or not taken) by the people you have contacted about the bullying concerns.

### When to contact organizations outside the school district

The school district has the primary responsibility to act on your child's concerns about safety at school. Schools will sometimes involve outside agencies, depending on the seriousness of the incidents.

## When your child is the bystander

Bystanders are people who witness but do not directly take part in bullying behaviour. Bystanders who do not report a bullying incident can be seen as supporting or condoning the bullying behaviour.

Many students are reluctant and fearful to step in or report when they see someone else being bullied. Whether it is they, or their parents or families, who become involved, the bystander may believe:

- the bully will turn on them,
- they will make it worse for the person who is being bullied,
- others will perceive them negatively as a “snitch,”
- the situation may get worse and they will get into trouble or
- there will be no support or action from other students or staff.

However, bullying affects everyone, and it is up to all of us to contribute to a safe and welcoming environment in our schools. Silence only makes the problem worse. Work with your child to develop the confidence and courage to report bullying.

Your family doctor should be involved if your child has experienced physical injuries or serious emotional stress (which should be documented as soon as possible after the incident). Counselling may be suggested through the Ministry of Children and Family Development or through local clinics and non-profit agencies that focus on mental health.

The police should be contacted – either by you or the school – in circumstances where student safety is threatened. This would apply if your child has been subject to serious physical assault or ongoing verbal and emotional harassment, as these may be considered criminal conduct that the police is responsible for investigating.

If the police are involved, you should write down what has happened and what you have

done to try and solve the problem. This report will help the police respond appropriately to your child’s situation and determine whether your child’s difficulties are related to those being experienced by others.

## What should students do when they witness bullying?

Students should feel empowered to take action to stop bullying. Some options include:

- reporting bullying on the ERASE Bullying website, using the online reporting tool, at [reportbullyingbc.ca](http://reportbullyingbc.ca),
- speaking out when they see bullying behaviour or
- reporting the behaviour to their parents or to staff at the school.

If your child informs you that he or she has witnessed bullying, try and learn more about the incident and encourage your child to report the bullying to teachers or school staff.

If your child is not comfortable doing so, you can report the incident to teachers or school staff. As a parent, you have the right to advocate for your children.

## What to do when your child is bullying others

Just as your child may be reluctant to share the fact that they have been bullied, your child will likely not inform you that they are bullying others. You may find out from others that your child is involved in bullying. You may also notice changes in your child’s behaviour, such as:

- seeking attention in ways that hurt the feelings of others,
- acting aggressively with family members, teachers, friends or pets,
- using bossy and manipulative behaviour to control others,
- getting into trouble at school over frequent conflicts with peers or authority figures,

- bringing home unexplained money or new possessions,
- being quick to anger or even exploding over minor issues,
- getting into fights and blaming others for provoking them,
- needing to dominate others in relationships,
- spending time with close friends who also use aggressive behaviour,
- preferring to spend time with much younger children (who may be easier to manipulate or control) or
- being quick to interpret accidents or neutral events as deliberately hostile acts.

If you notice these types of behaviours, you should talk with your child about what you’ve observed and find out if they have been bullying others.

If you suspect that your child has bullied others, or if you learn of this from other parents or the school, try to respond without being defensive or angry. Your child may feel they were only teasing. Discussing how your child’s actions affected others may help them understand their behaviour.

You will need to remain calm and supportive to help your child address this complicated issue. Finding out what has happened, and the time period over which it has happened, will help you determine the potential causes of his or her behaviour. These could include stress within the family, changes in the school environment, changes in your child’s social relationships or other factors, such as the onset of mental health issues.



## Working with the school

The school may contact you if your child is bullying others. You can help by staying calm and working with teachers and school staff as they investigate the issue and develop strategies to address it.

You can ask teachers and school staff for suggestions on how your child's academic and social needs can be addressed in a constructive manner.

Remember, it is not your child who is unacceptable; it is the behaviour. Support your child in seeking fair treatment during any investigation or discipline process.

If an investigation or disciplinary measure (such as suspension) takes place, you should know that:

- The school district must provide an education program to students under 16 years of age who have been suspended. The school district may provide that program in a variety of ways.
- There may be services available to your child, such as psychological assessment or referral to an outside agency, that will help your child recognize the seriousness of their behaviour and keep it from happening again.
- Your child can choose a parent or other support person to be present at all meetings and interviews.
- The school district should inform you of the appeal processes available to you. (See the next section for more information.)
- If the school believes the police should be involved, you or your child may wish to call a lawyer or legal aid.
- If your child is arrested and detained under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, the police must notify you.
- If your child is questioned by the police or another person in authority (e.g., the school administration) about a bullying incident, your child has the right to have an adult present and to choose who that person will be.

## Your right to appeal

If you and your child are not satisfied with the decision made by school staff to resolve the

bullying incident (whether your child is the bully or is being bullied), then your child has the right to appeal the decision. Appeal policies differ from district to district. Make sure you copy your district's most recent appeal policy and any forms that go with it.

Section 11 (Appeals) of the *BC School Act* gives parents and students the right to ask the school board to review any decision a school district employee has made, or failed to make, that "significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student." Every school district must have a policy on how parents and students can appeal. If the decision of a school district does not address your child's needs, you can present your appeal to a Superintendent of Achievement, through the Ministry of Education. One of the grounds for appeal to the Superintendent of Achievement is "Bullying behaviours, including intimidation, harassment or threats of violence by a student against another student."

If you are appealing a decision:

- Ask that your appeal be heard as soon as possible.
- Ask to be present to hear the information the school district employee gives. You may request this information ahead of time.
- Ask if you can bring someone to support you.
- Ask how the appeal hearing will be conducted:
  - How much time will you be given to present your information?
  - Who will be there? What is their role?
  - Will there be a chance to ask questions of others?
  - Will others be asking you questions?
- Ask for a copy of the minutes taken during the appeal.

If you believe that your appeal was conducted unfairly, you or your child may complain to the Office of the Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson can investigate the process and recommend a resolution, but cannot overturn a decision. You can obtain a complaint form from the Office of the Ombudsperson at [ombudsman.bc.ca](http://ombudsman.bc.ca).

If you believe that a teacher or administrator has not addressed the matter in a competent manner and has breached the Standards for Educators in BC, you can make a complaint to

the Commissioner for Teacher Discipline. For more information, visit the Teacher Regulation Branch website at [bcteacherregulation.ca](http://bcteacherregulation.ca).

Using the **Bullying Stops Here Logbook** to document the event and record the actions you've taken will ensure you have all the information you need to complete the complaint form.

## Finding additional support for your child

When children and youth have been bullied, they may lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed if they are anxious that they might be bullied again. You can help your child find alternate peer groups or new activities that offer more positive experiences and build their confidence.

When you are working with school staff to resolve the issue, ask if there are any extra-curricular programs they would recommend to help your child rebuild their confidence and assertiveness. Seek out programs that have some built-in structure and adult supervision.

Your child may also benefit from counselling. Counselling is available through the Ministry of Children and Family Development or through local clinics and non-profit agencies that focus on child and youth mental health.

Children who have bullied others also require help and support. Accessing that support through the school and the district is an important step in helping them rethink and revise their behaviours.

## Preventing bullying

Prevention is the best policy. Working together, we can all take steps to make our homes and schools places where our children feel safe and where they are presented with examples of respectful, caring behaviour.

### Your role as a parent

As a parent, you can help prevent bullying by modelling appropriate behaviour. We can teach our children how to care for and get along with others, deal with angry feelings and be assertive (rather than aggressive) in standing up for themselves.

We can help our children identify safe adults in their lives, such as friends, neighbours, coaches and leaders of community groups. Having more people to talk to about their challenges encourages young people to reach out for help.

We can also show our children how to identify bullying and how important it is to report bullying. We can let them know that they can talk to us if they are being bullied or if they know someone who is being bullied, and that we will support them in seeking help from the school and others.

## Schools can create a positive school climate

When schools create safe, caring and respectful environments, incidents of bullying and intimidation are much less common. Everyone in the school community has a role in creating a positive school climate:

- Students can take responsibility for their own behaviour and stand up for themselves.
- Parents can teach their child to act in caring ways and encourage their child to talk about concerns.
- Schools can set clear expectations of acceptable behaviours and hold students to those expectations.
- Staff can model and encourage positive social behaviour.

The BC Safe Schools Strategy focuses on preventing problems by building a school-

wide community of respect, inclusion, fairness and quality. Through policies, procedures and practices, schools become safe, caring and orderly environments.

## Awareness and prevention programs

School and district bullying awareness and prevention programs help children and youth develop age-appropriate language to talk about bullying. These programs also emphasize that students can report bullying without fear of repercussion.

Whether your child is a target, the person who is bullying or a bystander, your school district will have programs to support children.

These may include:

- bullying prevention,
- anger management,
- conflict resolution,
- restorative justice,
- mentoring,
- school counselling,
- peer counselling and mediation or
- social responsibility programs.

Ask questions about the programs you are considering to make sure they are suited to your child's needs. These programs are most effective when parents actively support their children in learning the life skills involved.

## Codes of conduct

All schools in British Columbia are required to develop a Code of Conduct to be used by the school community and that conforms with school district and provincial policies.

A Code of Conduct outlines expectations for positive behaviour and identifies forms of negative behaviour that are not allowed within the school. The expectations are appropriate to the age and abilities of the students, with increasing expectations for responsible behaviour for older students.

Codes of Conduct must follow the *BC Human Rights Code*, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of a person's race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex or sexual orientation.

How students conduct themselves outside of school hours has the potential to harm the well-being of others at school. This means that school administrators have responsibilities related to Internet postings and other electronic communications by students about school community members, including both students and school staff members.





## Parent Advisory Councils

School and district policies cannot, on their own, eliminate bullying. Administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, students and the community need to work together to build and maintain safe schools, based on justice, respect and compassion for all.

Local Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) and District Parent Advisory Councils (DPACs) can help achieve these goals. Through meetings, presentations and networking, they can hear from parents and students about their experiences with bullying, and their level of satisfaction with the school's or district's response. With this information, as well as resources from BCCPAC, PACs and DPACs can help school communities better understand and address the problem.

PACs and DPACs can provide parents and students with appropriate information on how to deal with bullying. They can also:

- assess what schools are doing to create and maintain a safe environment,
- recommend the formation of, and participate in, safe school committees,
- provide opportunities for parents and students to hear speakers knowledgeable about the issues surrounding bullying and
- support school district safe school policies and promote effective prevention and intervention programs.

All parents and guardians of public school students are members of the school PAC. PACs can contribute to a positive school climate by demonstrating caring and respectful working relationships and by paying attention to the concerns of parents, students and staff.

By working with school administrators and other staff members, the PAC can help evaluate the effectiveness of the school's current Code of Conduct and identify other personal and group safety needs within the school. The PAC can also organize parent education evenings that address emerging concerns, such as the safe and appropriate use of technology.

## Parents' and students' rights and responsibilities

Knowing the basic rights and responsibilities of everyone in the school community makes it easier to work together to solve individual and school-wide concerns about bullying.

We have summarized the basic rights and responsibilities of parents and students as set out in the *School Act*. Other legislation, such as the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* or the *Human Rights Code*, may apply to specific situations.

## Parents

- have the right and responsibility to ensure their child is treated fairly at school,
- have the right to be informed of their child's attendance, behaviour and progress in school,
- have the right to examine all student records kept by a board pertaining to their child,
- are entitled to information about their school and district (this information helps parents take advantage of what is available to their child),
- may consult with the teacher or principal about their child's educational program,
- are required, if requested, to consult with the teacher or principal about their child's educational program,
- have the right to appeal to the school board a decision, or failure to make a decision, by a school board employee that significantly affects the education, health or safety of their child,
- have the right to belong to the school Parent Advisory Council and
- can be held responsible, with or separately from their child, if their child destroys, damages or loses school board property.



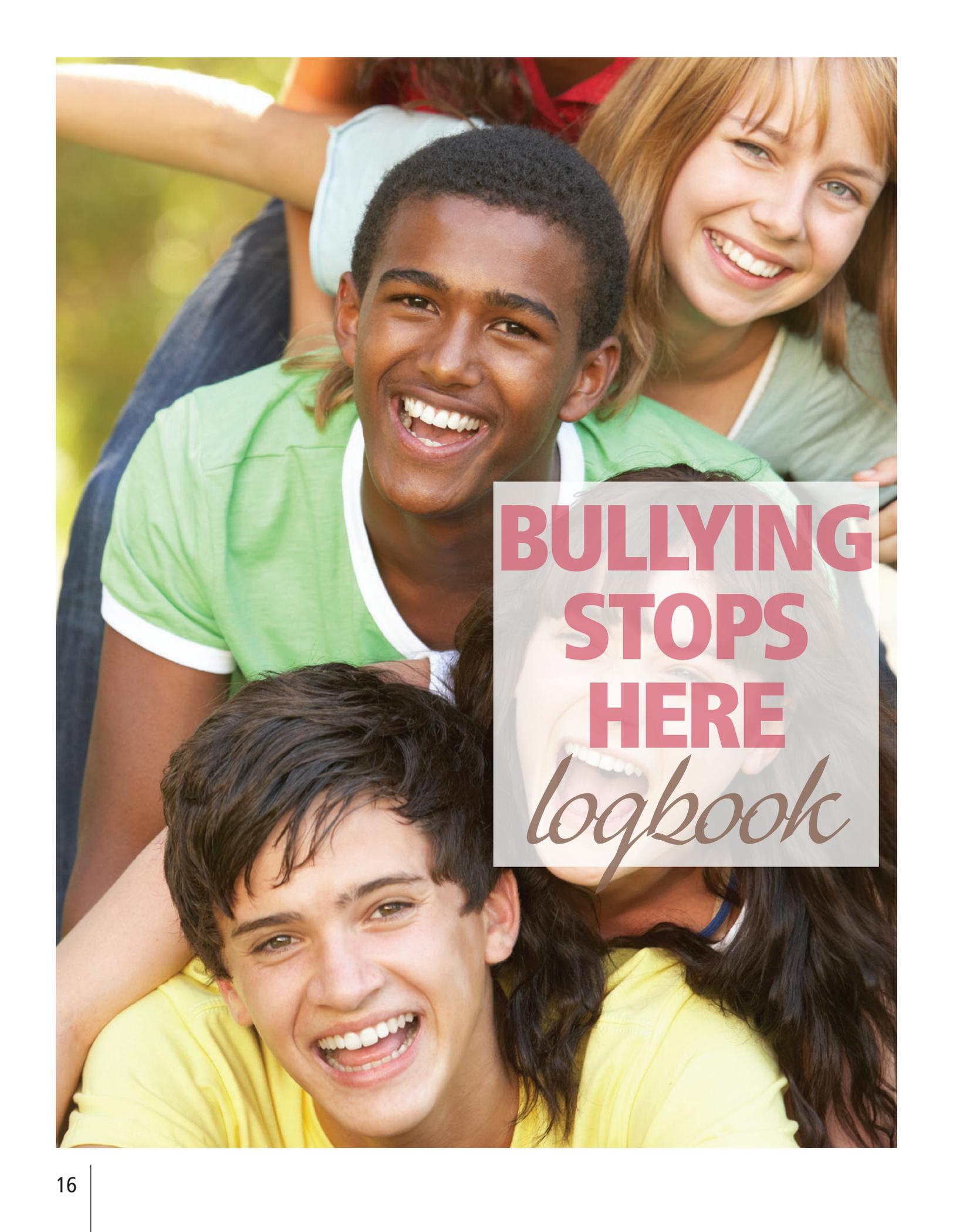
## Other rights that apply to students

- The right to be treated with respect and dignity.
- The right to be free from abuse and neglect.
- The right to be informed of their rights and how to access them.
- The right to be heard and have their views carefully considered.
- The right to information about decisions that affect them.

## Students

- have the right to participate in an educational program between the ages of 5 and 19,
- have the responsibility to participate in an educational program until at least the age of 16,
- have the responsibility to comply with school rules, policies and Code of Conduct,
- may be suspended from school for refusing to comply with school rules, policies and Code of Conduct, but up to the age of 16, must be provided with an educational program while suspended,
- have the right to consult with a teacher or principal about their educational program,
- have the right to appeal decisions that significantly affect their education, health or safety and
- can be held responsible, with or separately from their parents, if they (intentionally or through negligence) destroy, damage or lose school board property.

Besides the rights and responsibilities outlined in the *School Act* and Ministerial Orders and Regulations, children and youth have rights that apply through other provincial and federal legislation, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the principles of natural justice.



**BULLYING  
STOPS  
HERE**  
*logbook*

This **Bullying Stops Here Logbook** is a place for you to gather information about your child's experience of bullying. It can be very helpful to record and consolidate information about what happened and to identify possible solutions before you approach the school or community-based organizations with your concerns.

We suggest that you work through the steps below with your child.

1. In your child's words, describe details of the incident(s), including dates, times, places and who was involved. You can also record the effect of the bullying on your child.

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2. Clearly state the issue. This will help you communicate more effectively with teachers and school staff about the incident(s).

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3. Talk with your child about their bullying experience and list his or her ideas for solving the problem.

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## A record of actions and outcomes

It is helpful to keep all of your information together for easy reference, including records of conversations and any correspondence you have sent and received. Attach another sheet if needed.

You should note details such as:

- Who you contacted, the date you contacted them and how you contacted them (phone call, email, meeting, etc.).
- Who is investigating the incident.
- What the investigator will do.
- What you agreed to do.
- When and how the investigator will get back to you.
- How the school will keep your child safe and their identity confidential.
- What counselling or other services are available if your child needs help.
- If needed, how your child's transition back to school will be handled.
- Who you should talk to if you or your child have further concerns.
- What police involvement is required.
- What support is available if needed for you and your family.

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

By:  phone       person       letter/email

Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

By:  phone       person       letter/email

Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

By:  phone       person       letter/email

Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_



## Recommended reading

**Bazelon, Emily.** *Sticks and Stones: Defeating the Culture of Bullying and Rediscovering the Power of Character and Empathy.* Random House, 2013.

**Coloroso, Barbara.** *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Not So Innocent Bystander – From Pre-School to High School.* Collins Canada, 2015.

**Olweus, Dan.** *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do.* Reprinted 2013. First published by Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 1993.

**Short, Donn.** *Don't Be So Gay!: Queers, Bullying, and Making Schools Safe.* UBC Press, 2013.

**Taylor, Catherine, and Tracey Peter.** *Every Class in Every School: Egale Final Report on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Canadian Schools.* Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2011.

## BC resources

**BCCPAC.** *Speaking Up! A Parent Guide to Advocating for Students in Public Schools,* 2008.

**BCCPAC, BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association and BC Teachers' Federation.** *Supporting Student Success: Working Together in BC Public Schools,* 2006.

**BC Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation** *A Guide to Aboriginal Organizations and Services in British Columbia,* 2013.

A list of **Ministry of Education** publications available online can be found at [bc.ed.gov.bc.ca/pubs.htm](http://bc.ed.gov.bc.ca/pubs.htm). The list includes resources such as: *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, Parent's Guide to Individual Education Planning* and *Manual of School Law.*

**BC Ministry of Education.** *Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools,* 2008.

**Safe Schools Task Force.** *Facing Our Fears – Accepting Responsibility. Report of the Safe Schools Task Force: Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation in BC Schools.* June 11, 2003.

**Clark, Judith A. and Nicholls, Alan C.** *A Guide to Schools Legislation in British Columbia.* 2010.

**Office of the BC Ombudsman.** Fair Schools Public Report No. 35. May 1995.

[pinkshirtday.ca](http://pinkshirtday.ca)

**Rock Solid Foundation.** WITS Program (Walk away, Ignore, Talk it out, Seek help).

**Teacher Regulation Branch.** *Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in BC.*

## Community organizations

### THE AFFILIATION OF MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES AND SERVICE AGENCIES (AMSSA)

This non-partisan, non-profit, province-wide umbrella organization represents 85 multicultural and immigrant-serving organizations, and related organizations. It acts as a referral and resource link.

**TF** 1-888-355-5560 | **P** 604-718-2780  
[amssa@amssa.org](mailto:amssa@amssa.org) | [amssa.org](http://amssa.org)

### BC HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL

The BC Human Rights Tribunal is an independent, quasi-judicial body created by the *Human Rights Code*. The Tribunal is responsible for accepting, screening, mediating and adjudicating human rights complaints.

**TF** 1-888-440-8844 | **P** 604-775-2000  
**TTY** 604-775-20214 | [bchrt.bc.ca](http://bchrt.bc.ca)

### BC MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

An office of this ministry is located in every region in the province and is open Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. The ministry offers a variety of services to children and families in need or in crisis. To report suspected physical or sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation, press 0 on your phone and ask the operator for the BC Children's Help Line.

**TF** 1-800-663-9122 | **P** 310-1234  
**TTY** 1-800-667-4770 | [mcf.gov.bc.ca](http://mcf.gov.bc.ca)

**COMMISSIONER FOR  
TEACHER REGULATION**

The Commissioner oversees the discipline process for educators (certificate holders and letter of permission holders) in both the public and independent school systems in the province in accordance with the *School Act*.

**P** 604-775-4870

CommissionerTeacherRegulation@gov.bc.ca  
bcteacherregulation.ca

**FEDERATION OF BC YOUTH IN CARE NETWORKS**

The Federation is a youth-driven, provincial, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of young people in and from government care in BC, between the ages of 14 and 24.

**TF** 1-800-565-8055

info@fbcyicn.ca | fbcyicn.ca

**IMMIGRANT SERVICES SOCIETY OF BC**

The largest agency of its kind in Western Canada, ISSBC has targeted programs for refugees, women, children and youth, plus support services in over 45 languages.

**P** 604-684-2561

iss@issbc.org | issbc.org

**LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF BC**

The mandate of the Association is to be the provincial network and voice for persons with Learning Disabilities (LD) and those who support them. Founded in 1973, the association provides information and resources to ensure the full participation of children, youth and adults with LD in today's society.

**P** 250-370-9513

info@ldabc.ca | ldabc.ca

**OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION & PRIVACY  
COMMISSIONER FOR BC**

This office is independent from government and promotes and protects the information and privacy rights of British Columbians.

**P** 250-387-5629

info@oipc.bc.ca | oipc.bc.ca

**PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS  
AND GAYS (PFLAG)**

This is a support group for parents with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered children that provides education, community resources on homosexuality and advocacy for equal rights.

**P** 604-626-5667

info@pflagvancouver.com

pflagvancouver.com

**PARENT SUPPORT SERVICES SOCIETY OF BC**

This organization offers Parent Support Circles in different languages in communities around the province. The circles provide a safe environment in which parents can talk about their parenting challenges, receive support and develop parenting skills.

**TF** 1-877-345-9777

parentsupportbc.ca

**PEOPLE'S LAW SCHOOL**

This independent, non-profit, non-partisan society provides free public legal education and information services, resources and education to help people in BC resolve everyday legal matters.

**P** 604-331-5400

info@publiclegaled.bc.ca | publiclegaled.bc.ca

**PROVINCIAL GAY & LESBIAN CONTACT LINE**

This service provides information about services and resources in designated areas.

**TF** 1-800-566-1170

**WELCOME BC**

WelcomeBC.ca helps ensure new British Columbians are able to settle, gain employment, become active members of their communities and contribute fully to the social and economic prosperity of BC. WelcomeBC also publishes a *Newcomer's Guide to British Columbia* in 14 languages.

welcomebc.ca

**YOUTH AGAINST VIOLENCE LINE**

This is a safe, confidential way for youth to pass on information, prevent crime or ask for assistance.

**TF** 1-800-680-4264

**TEXT** 604-836-6381

**TTY** 604-875-0885

info@youthagainstviolenceline.com

youthagainstviolenceline.com





## Acknowledgements

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### BC CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS (BCCPAC)

BCCPAC ensures a parent voice at the provincial level and helps PACs and DPACs act as advisors in their schools and districts.

**P** 604-687-4433 | **F** 604-687-4488  
info@bccpac.bc.ca | bccpac.bc.ca



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