



LAKWOOD

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Information for parents to use in preventing bullying and risky online behaviors

What should a parent do if they suspect their child is being bullied?

If the bullying occurs during the school day, contact the administrator of your child's school to report bullying. The administrator will then follow-up with the involved students to confirm the report of bullying. Administrators will document all of the information for each situation, and if necessary, will report to law enforcement. Administrators will also refer the bullying victim to counseling, if appropriate and will follow-up on the well-being of any involved students in the school through direct and parent contacts. Students will receive disciplinary action in keeping with school policies for violations that occur at school or off-campus when violations create an unsafe or disruptive effect.

Tips for parents on identifying and stopping bullying and harassment:

Encourage your child to speak with you about bullying at school. Studies show that children often don't tell their parents or other adults about bullying because they believe that the adults will not believe them. Children may also think that they should be able to solve their own problems. Other children may be afraid that telling an adult will result in worse treatment from the child doing the bullying. Below are tips on ways to identify if your child is being bullied. These tips are from the *Steps to Respect* program.

Signs that may indicate that your child is being bullied:

- Fear of riding the school bus
- Cuts or bruises
- Damaged clothing or belongings
- Frequently "lost" lunch money
- Frequent requests to stay home from school
- Frequent unexplained minor illnesses
- Sleeplessness or nightmares
- Depression, or lack of enthusiasm for hobbies or friends
- Declining school performance

What can I do if my child is bullied?

- Assure your child that he/she is not to blame.
- Instruct your child not to fight back. Bullying lasts longer and becomes more severe when children fight back. Physical injuries are often the result.
- Advise your child to report all bullying incidents to an adult at school or a parent.
- Role-play friendship-developing social skills with your child. For example you can help him/her practice making conversation, joining a group activity, being respectful, and being assertive. Friendships can help buffer a child from the harmful effects of bullying.

Information on risky online behavior, including bullying and harassment

These are the types of risky behaviors that students are participating in online:

- Posting personal information online (56 percent of youth internet users)

- Interacting with unknown people (43 percent of youth internet users)
 - Having unknown people on a friend list (35 percent of youth internet or social network users)
 - Using the internet to make rude and nasty comments to others (28 percent of youth internet users)
 - Sending personal information to unknown people (26 percent of youth internet users)
 - Downloading images from file-sharing programs (15 percent of youth internet users)
 - visiting X-rated sites on purpose (13 percent of youth internet users)
 - Using the internet to embarrass or harass people you are mad at (9 percent of youth internet users)
 - Talking online with unknown people about sex (5 percent of youth internet users)
- Source: Janis Wolak et al., Online "Predators" and their Victims: Myths, Realities and Implications for Prevention and Treatment, 63 American Psychologist 111 (2008).

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Tips for parents on risky online behavior:

Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's use of online resources

- Keep the computer in a busy area of your home.
- Check your child's text messages and social network (Facebook, Formspring, etc.) pages frequently and randomly - remember, you are paying for the devices and access, and you may be liable for misuse.
- Talk about cyberbullying: ask your child if they know someone who has been a victim-ask if they have been victimized.
- Restricting access to social networking or chat rooms will not eradicate the problems - students are tech savvy and will find ways around your restrictions, and may participate in more dangerous online activity.

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Tips for parents to share with their students

Talk about these risky online behaviors with your child and explain how these behaviors may make your child unsafe.

- One should never post, text, or email a snide remark about another person that you would not be willing to say to that person directly.
- Never give out personal information online, whether in instant message profiles, chat rooms, blogs, or personal Web sites.
- Parents are the only ones who should ever have access to student passwords. Students should never give a password or other personal identification to a friend.
- Never respond to a threatening message. Save it or print it out and show it to an adult.
- Never open email from an unknown sender or from someone who is known as a bully.
- Never put anything online or into an email that you would not want your classmates or your family to see.
- Do not send an email when you are angry. Wait 24 hours. Before clicking "send" ask how you would feel to get that message.
- Never join in when someone is bullying others. Show such messages to an adult.
- Be as polite online as you should always be in person.