

### **Are there any services for children who are struggling with how to cope with the bullying?**

You may contact a school counselor, nurse, psychologist or social worker to get support for your child. You may also contact your child's doctor or your health insurance company to learn about other services. Some communities have mental health agencies that provide services on a sliding fee scale that is tied to a family's income. You may be able to find these agencies by calling 2-1-1 or in the yellow pages of the phone book.

### **What other options do I have?**

You may ask the principal about moving your child to a different classroom or school. You may also choose to open enroll your child to another school district or teach your child yourself at home. This is often called home schooling. You can find more information about how to open enroll your child to another school district at [http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms\\_psctoc](http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_psctoc). You can learn more about home schooling at [http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms\\_homeb](http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_homeb).

You may also contact the local police or Sheriff's Department if you think a crime was committed.

### **May I file a complaint with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction?**

By law, the Department of Public Instruction does not have the authority to investigate reports of bullying in local school districts. However, if a parent believes the bullying is related to a protected class (the student's gender, race, religion, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, or disability) and the parent's complaint was not resolved by the school district to the parent's satisfaction, the parent may file an appeal with the Department of Public Instruction. You can find more information about how to file an appeal at <http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/files/sped/pdf/pndbrochure.pdf>

### **For more information contact:**

Student Services/Prevention and Wellness  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
P.O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707-7841  
608-266-8960 or 1-800-441-4563  
[dpisspw@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:dpisspw@dpi.wi.gov)  
[http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw\\_safeschool](http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw_safeschool)

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The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital status or parental status, sexual orientation, or disability.



Information for parents of students who have been bullied.

# **My child has been bullied.**

## **What can I do?**

# If you believe your child has been bullied...

## **What is bullying?**

Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions intending to cause fear, intimidation, or harm. Bullying can involve hurting a person's body or possessions, saying or writing mean things, and hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. Bullying can occur at school, at home, in the community, or through social media or the internet. Both children who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

## **What are the laws related to bullying in Wisconsin?**

Wisconsin law requires every school district to have a policy that prohibits bullying by students. The policy must be given to parents and students each year and to anyone else who requests it. The law leaves it up to local school officials to determine what bullying is and what actions will be taken to stop it.

Wisconsin law also requires school districts to have a policy that prohibits discrimination against students related to a student's gender, race, religion, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, or disability. Discrimination includes harassment and bullying done by students. A complaint procedure should be posted in student and staff handbooks, and a school employee should be designated to receive discrimination complaints. You can learn more about this law and what you can do if you believe

your child has been bullied because she or he is in a protected class at: <http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/files/sped/pdf/pndbrochure.pdf>.

Wisconsin law also requires school districts to have a code for students' behavior in the classroom. The code should specify the behavior that interferes with the teacher's ability to teach effectively, the grounds for removing a student from the classroom, a procedure for determining the appropriate educational placement of the student, and how parents will be notified.

## **Who should I talk to if my child is being bullied?**

Check the student handbook and follow the reporting procedure, if one is provided. Generally, if the bullying is occurring in the classroom, contact the teacher first. For all other bullying at school, contact the principal.

## **What can I do if the teacher and principal are not responding to my concerns about my child being bullied?**

If you have not been able to resolve the problem at the school level, contact the district administrator. If your concern is still not resolved, you may contact the school board. Some districts have a formal procedure where a written complaint is submitted to the district administrator or school board. Contact your school district office to find out what procedures your district has.

## **How can I help my child cope with bullying?**

You can talk with them and give them some tips. Tell them it is normal for children to be frightened or angry when other children bully them. Tell them they can discourage attacks by showing confidence and not fear to the bully.

Children should not fight with the bully or respond with verbal or written insults. This could lead to more aggression and possibly serious injury. Have your child call out for help or find an adult or peer right away if he or she feels unsafe.

Children who are bullied online or in text messages should not reply. It is best for them to show the message to an adult and block any more messages from the sender. Remind them to only accept messages from people they know.

Give your child these tips to handle face-to-face bullying:

**Talk** to the bullying child if it feels safe. Look him or her in the eye and say strongly but calmly, "Leave me alone," or, "You don't scare me."

**Walk away** from the bullying child or children. Children who are being bullied should not run (even though they may want to). It may strengthen a feeling of power in the bullying child.

**Tell an adult** about the episode. It might help for children to identify an adult at school to tell if incidents occur. Children who see another child being harmed also should seek help from an adult right away.

Children may worry about making other children angry by telling on them, but exposing bullying is the only way to stop the problem. A child can ask to remain anonymous when reporting an incident.