

# Take Action Against Bullying

## What is bullying?

TEC §37.0832 - “Bullying” means engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related-activity, or in a vehicle operated by the district and that: 1.) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or of damage to the student’s property; or 2.) is sufficiently severe, persistent and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.



**Conduct described in the definition of “bullying” is considered bullying if the conduct:** 1.) exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and 2.) interferes with a student’s education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school. This definition applies to student-on-student behavior only.

## What bullying is not:

Bullying is *not* a fact of life. It is *not* a phase children have to go through. Likewise, it is *not* just “a part of growing up,” “kids being kids” or an “unavoidable part of life.” Bullying should not be dismissed nor tolerated. Bullying is not indicated when the issues are surrounding conduct by an adult toward a student. Contact the human resources department or campus administrators for guidance on how to handle the alleged adult misconduct.

## Types of bullying:

Bullying can take on many different forms. It can be *physical* (hitting or pushing), *social relational* (spreading rumors, leaving people out on purpose, breaking up friendships) or *verbal* (name calling or taunting). *Cyberbullying* (using the Internet or mobile phones to harm others) is considered a form of verbal bullying.

### How do I know if a student is being bullied?

While every child is different, some common warning signs that a student is being bullied include when he or she -

- Is unhappy, downhearted, depressed or has mood swings with anger or irritation.
- Experiences a sudden drop in grades/Lacks interest in school, is afraid to go or refuses to go.
- Withdraws from family or school activities/Stops talking about peers and everyday activities.
- Comes home with torn or missing clothes or keeps losing things or has injuries inconsistent with the explanation.
- Experiences stomachaches, headaches, panic attacks, is unable to sleep or sleeps too much.

### How do I know if a student is being a bully?

Some warning signs that a student is a bully toward another student are when he or she -

- Feels contempt for another human being and is intolerant towards differences.
- Is often hot tempered, impulsive, aggressive, nasty, spiteful, and/or oppositional.
- Has a marked need to dominate or manipulate others/Is good at talking his or her way out of situations.
- Finds it difficult to fit in with rules.

### What if my child is being bullied?

LISD has a strong policy prohibiting bullying. You need to:

- Report bullying to your child’s assistant principal who will then investigate the situation.
- If counseling resources are needed because your child is a bully, victim or bystander - please contact your child’s school counselor or notify an assistant principal.
- Visit [www.leanderisd.org](http://www.leanderisd.org) for more information about LISD’s safe schools program.

### How to help...

#### If a student you know is being bullied:

- **Listen to him or her.** Tell him or her, “I hear you; I am here for you; I believe you; It is not your fault. It takes courage to tell me. Thank you.”
- **Talk about what happened and what he or she can do if it happens again** (turn around and walk away, tell a teacher or another trusted adult, or be in a group for more protection).
- **Help the student become “bully proof.”** Bullies often pick on students who are shy, looking down, have poor posture who appear to have low self-esteem or low self-confidence. Help the student stand up straight, look people in the eye, smile, stay calm and talk in a confident voice. Training for the bystanders is crucial in helping to stop bullying of students who are unable to speak up for themselves.

### How to help...

#### If you witness a student being a bully:

When you witness bullying, immediately address the behavior.

Report the incident to to your child’s counselor or assistant principal.

- At home, follow through with discipline consequences - *let them know that the behavior is not okay.*
- Teach empathy, acceptance and tolerance.

## Facts about bullying...

- Bullying can cause serious and lasting harm. It can be a life changing event.
- School is the place where the majority of bullying occurs. About 40-70% of bullying takes place during breaks in the schoolyard, in corridors, or in secluded places such as the bathroom. (USDHHS)
- Bullying is a form of abuse, harassment and violence.
- Bullying happens more frequently than is reported. Often it is not reported because the victim is afraid no one will believe them, they think they will get blamed, or they believe the bully will retaliate.