

# TAKE ACTION AGAINST BULLYING

Adapted from Leeander ISD

## 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.

## 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.

## 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 to Help

If a student you know is being bullied -

- **Listen to them.** Tell them, “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 students “bully proof” themselves.** 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.

### **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 their way out of situations.
- Finds it difficult to fit in with rules.

### **How to Help**

When you witness bullying, immediately address the behavior. Report the incident to the appropriate school official.

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

### **Reporting Bullying**

Mt. Enterprise ISD has a strong policy prohibiting bullying. If you witness bullying or are a victim of bullying, you need to report the incident to a teacher or the campus principal, who will then investigate the situation.