

A BULLY PREVENTION IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY



Parent/Guardian Handout



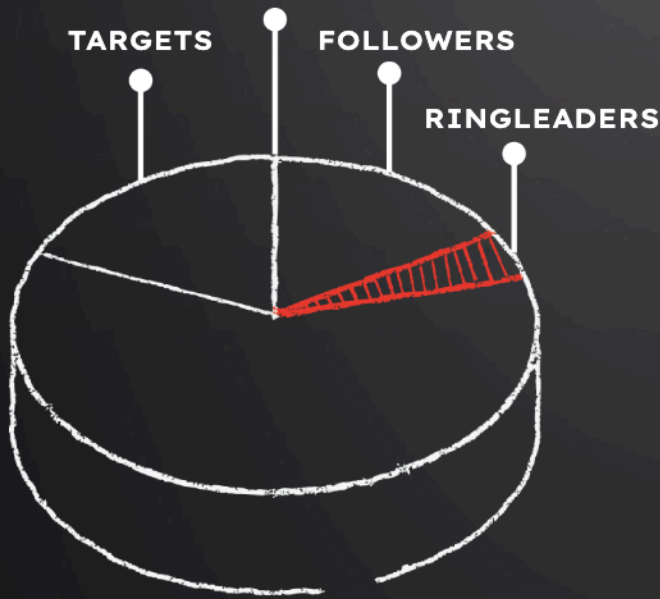
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Dare to Care is a National Award winning program:
Imagine Canada Community Award
Government of Alberta Leadership Award

Scope of the Problem



79% ARE THE SILENT MAJORITY.

What's wrong with this picture?

- 15% ARE TARGETS OF BULLYING
- 6% ARE BULLIES
- 79% ARE THE SILENT MAJORITY

ON AVERAGE IN ANY SCHOOL, SPORT ORGANIZATION OR WORKPLACE
(PREVNet Canada)

The Facts

ON AVERAGE, IN ANY SCHOOL POPULATION (K-8)

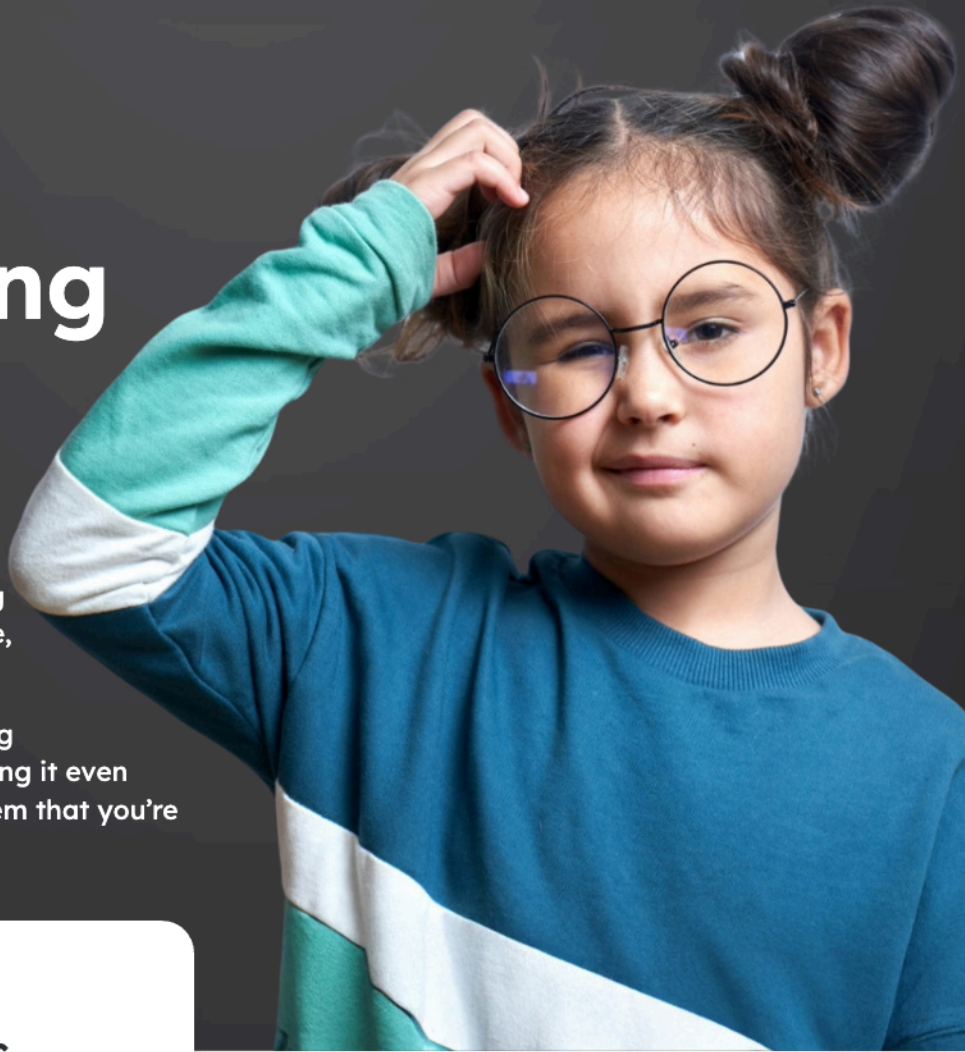
- Of boys identified as bullies in grades six to nine, 60% had a criminal record by age 24. (Olweus, 1993)
- In a classroom of 35 students, between 4 and 6 children are bullying and/or are being bullied. (PREVnet, 2025)
- Canada ranked a dismal 26th and 27th out of 35 countries on measures of bullying and victimization, according to a recent World Health Organization survey. (UNICEF, 2020)
- In about 85-88% of bullying incidents observed on the school playground, peers were present and were watching the bullying happen. (PREVnet, 2025)
- Teachers only witness about 4% of bullying, with most incidents going unreported. (Dryden-Edwards and Stoppler, 2024)
- 23% of children who are frequently targeted have sought help for a mental illness issue by age 30. (Sourander, 2015)
- Without a clear school policy on bullying and a strong commitment to ensure its implementation, students will not feel supported in standing up to bullying.

What is Bullying?



NORMAL CONFLICT VERSUS BULLYING

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- This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



- Offensive comments, jokes or behaviours that disparage or ridicule an individual's race, ethnic, or religious background/beliefs.

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- Under Canada's Criminal Code, the offence of cyberbullying is defined as sharing intimate images of a person without the consent of the person in the image. This law applies to everyone, not just people under 18. The intent of this is to protect the privacy of a person.
www.getcybersafe.gc.ca

- Online abuse covers any type of behaviour on the Internet, using any type of device or technology, that intentionally harms a person(s). This behaviour may or may not be considered criminal in nature.

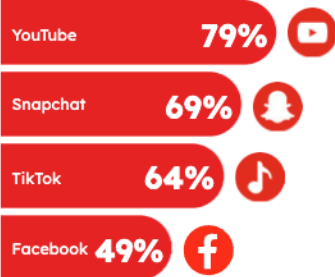
- To frighten or threaten someone usually in order to persuade them to do something they don't want to do.

- Any comments or actions of a sexual nature that are unwelcome and make the recipient uncomfortable. This includes derogatory and/or hurtful comments about an individual's gender, gender identification, or sexual orientation.

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Cyberbullying

STATISTICS:

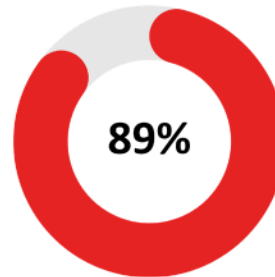


Children and young adults that spend time on these social media platforms are most likely to be cyber bullied.

(Security.org)

Only **1 in 10** teen targets of cyberbullying will inform a parent or trusted adult.

(National Crime Prevention Council)



89% of Canadian teachers believe cyberbullying is the number one safety issue in public schools.

(Public Safety Canada, 2022)



Canadian youth report they have been cyberbullied. (StatCan, 2023)

CYBERBULLYING WARNING SIGNS:

- Long hours on their devices or a sudden desire to completely stop using devices.
- Spending more time than usual in their room.
- Becoming emotional or upset after being on devices/online.
- Being nervous, jumpy or anxious any time they get a message, notification or call.
- Becoming secretive or defensive of their digital activities and who they are connecting with online. (ex. Hiding screens when adults are close by)
- Significant changes in mood, behaviour, sleep, weight, energy or appetite. This includes unexpected emotional outbursts or displaying signs of depression.
- Falling behind in school or an unexplained decline in grades.
- Withdrawing or showing a lack of interest in family, friends, school and activities.
- Increased reports of illness and asking to stay home from school, sport, or social gatherings.
- Asking to have or borrow money but being secretive about what they need it for.
- Finding unexplained pictures on their devices or computers.

HELP YOUR CHILD NAVIGATE DIGITAL SPACES:

- Take **ALL** Internet access out of the bedroom. (ex. Cell phones, computers, gaming devices)
- Regularly review privacy/account settings (ex. Location sharing).
- Monitor your child's followers/following.
- Set up a "**Device Schedule**" and teach youth to self-monitor.
- Establish a **two-way device contract** and specify you won't take the device.
- Keep lines of communication open with your children (support and solutions vs. judgment and blame).
- Ensure your athlete is aware of the KidsHelp Phone and knows where they can find the number. **(1-800-668-6868)**

"Kids are growing up on a digital playground and no one is on recess duty." – Kevin Honeycutt, Educator



TIPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CYBERBULLYING & ONLINE ABUSE:

- Remain as anonymous as possible online. Never publicly display your home address, mobile number or full date of birth.
- Be modest with your photos. Do not show off nudity, jewellery or money.
- Remember, taking and sharing intimate images of yourself and others is dangerous and could even be illegal. In the wrong hands, intimate images can be used to blackmail people. (ie. Sextortion)
- Be careful about the amount of personal information and images you keep on your mobile phone. If someone were to steal your phone or if you were to lose it, what information would they have access to?
- Check your social media privacy settings regularly; once a month is recommended.
- Be sure you know your followers personally and only accept friend requests from people you know in real life.

HOW TO RESPOND TO CYBER ABUSE:

- Don't respond to abusive messages or incidents directly; it will only make the situation worse.
- Unfollow, "unfriend", block, restrict, report, or ignore accounts that are abusive, insulting, rude, discriminatory, threatening, or disrespectful.
- Take a screenshot or save messages, images and emails that you consider abusive or possibly criminal in nature.
- Become an online advocate by speaking up when you see harmful online behaviour.
- Cyberbullying and Cyber Abuse are **NEVER** okay. Report this behaviour to your school, sports organization, workplace, and in severe situations, the police.

What is Sextortion?

DEFINITION: When someone threatens to share intimate details, sexual images or video online if you don't meet their demands. They might do this to get money, sexual favours or more nude photos.

92% of sextortion incidents target males between the ages of 14-18.

Sextortion reports increased by 88% between 2022 and 2024.

Financial sextortion makes up 79% of the cases.

As trusted adults in the lives of youth, we must not think, “Oh, that would never happen to my child.” Instead we must keep lines of communication open with youth and if/when they come to us, be there for support and solutions; not judgment and blame.

WHAT TO DO IF CHILD IS EXPERIENCING SEXTORTION:

1. Before anything online occurs, teach your child to trust their instincts and practice caution when communicating online.
2. If your child feels that they are being targeted, have them immediately stop any further communication with the offender or person they think is sextorting them.
3. Tell them not to comply with any further threats and DO NOT send any additional money or images.
4. Applaud them for reaching out to a trusted adult or guardian; be careful not to project any blame or guilt on them.
5. Save a copy of any images your child sent. Next, take screenshots of the threatening messages and the perpetrator's profile (ex. Username, platform, photos).
6. Deactivate, but do not delete your child's social media accounts.
7. Report to cybertip.ca or your local police. Your child won't be in trouble with law enforcement and they are not the one to blame in this situation. By reporting it, you can help make it stop. You can provide your name and contact information, or complete the form anonymously.
8. Assure your child that there is life after the shared images. The offender may try to make them feel otherwise and, they might not see a way forward, but they are not alone.

Characteristics of Children who are Targeted



PASSIVE TARGETS:

- Most common type of target; easy to identify.
- Cry easily.
- Lack the ability to use humor to defuse conflict.
- May be lonely and depressed.
- Yields easily to bullying.
- Likely to be anxious and insecure.
- Unable to defend themselves.
- Make little attempt to make friends.

NEURODIVERSE TARGETS:

While we can't possibly capture the characteristics of all neurodiverse children, this list includes the most common characteristics.

- Often difficult to recognize as targets.
- Restless children who irritate and tease others and don't know when to stop.
- Lacking Social Skills.
- Try to make friends but are often rejected in the process.
- Fight back in bullying situations but end up losing with frustration and distress.
- May be diagnosed with ADD, autism spectrum, gifted, non-verbal learning disabilities, etc.
- Adults tend to lack empathy and patience when working with neurodiverse children.

STEPS TO HELP A NEURODIVERSE CHILD:

1. Observe student for a week
2. Make a list of social skills that need improvement
3. Pick one social skill at a time (and include parents)
4. Seek outside resources and support
5. Reframe 



Misinterpret social cues – see problems where problems don't exist.

- Have an overdeveloped brainstem – more pathways hardwired to that area.
- Easily slip into fight or flight or flee.
- Very unpredictable and therefore not well liked by peers.
- Have remorse and guilt after one of their outbursts.
- While they are often involved in conflicts, the majority of reactive children are not bullies.

- Help student recognize physiological signs of escalation.
- Big breaths – Hot chocolate breathing.
- Establish a visual clue.
- Establish a safe place – in school it depends on child's age.
- Process time - after a child has a chance to "reclaim their calm."
- Brain gym.

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Identifying Targets of Bullying

SIGNS AT HOME

- Coming home from school with torn or disordered clothing, or with damaged books.
- Having bruises, injuries, cuts and scratches that can't be explained.
- Not bringing home classmates or other peers after school and seldom spending time in the homes or playgrounds of classmates Not having a single good friend.
- Seldom invited to parties.
- Appearing afraid or reluctant to go to school in the morning, having a poor appetite, repeated headaches, or stomach pains (especially in the morning).
- Choosing an "illogical" route for going to and from school.
- Losing interest in schoolwork, drop in grades.
- Appearing unhappy, depressed, showing unexpected mood shifts with irritability and sudden outbursts of temper.
- Requesting or stealing extra money from family (to give to bullies).

SIGNS AT SCHOOL

- Being (repeatedly) teased, called names, taunted, belittled, ridiculed, intimidated, degraded, threatened, given orders, dominated, subdued.
- Being made fun of and laughed at in a derisive and unfriendly way.
- Getting picked on, pushed around, shoved, punched, hit, kicked and not being able to adequately.
- Becoming involved in 'quarrels' or 'fights' in which they are fairly defenseless and try to withdraw (perhaps cry).
- Having their books, money, or other belongings taken or damaged.
- Having bruises, injuries, scratches or torn clothing that can't be explained.
- Often being alone and excluded from peer groups during breaks and lunchtime; not seeming to have a single good friend in the class.
- Being among the last chosen in team games.
- Trying to stay close to the teacher or other adults during breaks.
- Having difficulty speaking up in class.
- Appearing depressed, unhappy, distressed, tearful.
- Showing sudden or gradual deterioration of schoolwork.

Steps to Take if Your Child is Being Bullied

LISTEN

Often children do not wish to tell their parents due to shame and embarrassment, or fear that the bullies will retaliate if they tell. If you are worried that your child is being bullied, ask him or her directly. Take whatever your child says seriously and find out exactly what has been going on. Don't promise to keep the bullying a secret but reassure your child that you will help them sort out the problem. **DOCUMENT THE SITUATION!** Watch for symptoms that your child may be a bully.

TELL THE SCHOOL

Work with the school immediately to make sure your child is safe, that monitoring at school is adequate. If the bullying is happening on the way to and from school, arrange for the child to get to school with older, supportive children or take him or her until other interventions take place. **Document the situation.**

Step 1: Document and set up a meeting with the Classroom Teacher

Step 2: Follow up with the Classroom Teacher a week later. Share your observations with the teacher. If you feel nothing has changed for your child, then inform the teacher that you will continue to **document** and will check in again in a few days.

Step 3: After two meetings with the teacher if nothing has changed for your child, then take your concerns to Administration. Continue to document throughout this time.

WORK WITH OTHER PARENTS

Bullying is a community problem, not just a school issue. Work with other parents in the community to ensure that the children in your neighborhood are supervised closely on their way to and from schools. **DON'T BE A SILENT MAJORITY!!! GET INVOLVED!!**

TEACH SOCIAL SKILLS

If you find that your child is a perpetual target and that they are bullied wherever they go, try and think how your child reacts to people. Perhaps they don't know how to talk or play with other children. If you find your child is targeted in all social settings and not just at school then watch him/her interact with siblings and peers. Are there social skills that are weak or lacking? If so, help them develop these skills through role playing and behaviour charts. If your child is timid and lacks friends, try to arrange for your child to participate in positive social groups which meet his or her interests. Developing your child's special skills and confidence in the context of a positive social group can be very helpful.

HA HA SO

Help Assert Yourself

Humour
Avoid

Self-Talk

Own It

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Bullies are best identified by their personality style rather than by outward manifestations based on appearance, number of friends or achievement:

- [illegible]

A photograph of three young girls. The girl in the foreground is looking towards the right, wearing a denim jacket and a backpack. Behind her, another girl is looking in the same direction. On the far right, a third girl is partially visible, looking down. The background is dark and out of focus.

What Can i do if my Child is Bullying

STAY CALM: When faced with a report that your child has been bullying others, it is important to resist the urge to react with anger or defensiveness. Talk to your child, talk to his or her teachers and administrators (Keep in mind that a bully will try to deny or minimize wrongdoing.)

BE FIRM: Make it very clear to your child that you will not tolerate this kind of behaviour and discuss with your child the negative impact bullying has on the victim. Do not accept explanations that “it was all in fun.”

ENCOURAGE EXPRESSION: Find out if there is something in particular which is troubling your child. While it is important to acknowledge your child’s feelings, it is crucial that he/she not be allowed to avoid responsibility or *BLAME THE TARGET FOR THEIR ACTIONS.*

USE NON-VIOLENT CONSEQUENCES: Physical punishment reinforces the idea that violence solves problems. Children learn from our behaviour, therefore, parents must demonstrate civilized ways of dealing with conflict. The consequence must be in proportion with the severity of your child’s actions as well as appropriate for his/her age and stage of development. ***Praise the efforts your child makes toward non-violent and responsible behaviour.

AID RECONCILIATION: Work out a way for your child to make amends for the bullying.

SET RULES/LIMITS: Stop any show of aggression immediately and help the child find other, non aggressive ways of reacting. Increase supervision of your child’s activities and whereabouts, and who they are associating with.

MONITOR TECHNOLOGY AND TELEVISION USE: If your child is viewing violent shows, following inappropriate social media influencers or groups, or is playing excessive violent video games, this may increase aggressive behavior. Teach your child to become a critical user of all media sources.

SPEND TIME: Reconnect with your child. Provide reassurance that you still love them ~ it is the behaviour you don’t like. Spend at least one hour of quality time with your child every day.

REFLECT: Parents must be a positive role model for their children. Recognize that every time you interact with your children (or they see you interact with others), you are teaching them something. Model and reinforce caring and sensitivity to others.



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IM△GINE
CANADA

