

What should I do if my child is bullying others?

Signs that your child has bullying tendencies:

- He or she gets into physical or verbal fights.
- He or she hangs out with other kids who bully.
- He or she seems overly aggressive.
- He or she gets sent to the principal's office regularly.
- He or she has trouble accepting blame.
- He or she has unexplained money or other items.
- He or she is overly concerned about reputation or popularity.

Signs that your child may be cyberbullying:

- He or she quickly switches or closes programs on the computer when you walk by.
- Your child avoids conversations about what he or she is doing online or on the cell phone.
- Your child gets upset when he or she cannot use the computer or the cell phone.
- Your child uses a social media account under a different name.

When talking with your child, there are several things you should address.

- Let your child know that it is never OK to bully another child.
- Make sure your child is aware of what behaviors are considered bullying. Sometimes children who bully lack awareness of how their actions affect others.
- Teach your child that everyone has feelings and those feelings can be hurt. Talk with your child about what words and actions might hurt others.

Every school district is required to handle complaints of harassment; however, there are policies in place to protect students' privacy. Every child is covered under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. If your child is involved in a bullying situation, their personal information will not be disclosed to anyone, including the families of the other children involved. In an emergency situation, FERPA permits school officials to disclose educational records without parental consent to appropriate parties such as law enforcement officials, public health officials, and trained medical personnel.

Bullying is a learned behavior, and that means that it can be unlearned. You may need to seek additional help from your child's doctor, teachers, school counselor, principal, or therapist.