Bullying Prevention Information for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers
Research Speaks Volumes

- 160,000 students each day miss school for fear of being bullied;
- 1 in 3 students say they have been bullied at school;
- Only 1 in 3 of the victims told an adult;
- Bullying can happen anywhere – school bus, sporting events, aftercare programs, etc.;
What Is Bullying?

A bully is a person who purposely tries to hurt others by:

- Being mean
- Name-calling
- Telling lies/Spreading rumors
- Texting/sending mean and/or hateful messages
ELEMENTS of BULLYING

These 3 conditions MUST be in place to create a bullying situation:

1. Negative or malicious behavior, AND
2. Behavior repeated over a period of time, AND
3. A relationship in which there is an imbalance in strength or power.
BULLYING AFFECTS EVERYONE!

- **Targets** often have academic, health, behavioral and emotional issues.
- **Bullies** are more likely to not follow rules and disrupt school.
- **Bystanders** often feel guilt, stress and anxiety if nothing is done.
Students most likely to be targets of bullying

- Physical appearances (weight, height)
- Disabilities (learning disabilities, ADHD, autism)
- Social and/or emotional difficulties (homelessness)
- Culture differences (race, ethnicity, socio-economic factors)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ)
Common characteristics of children who bully

- Impulsive, dominant, easily frustrated and annoyed
- Can be popular but their peers really do not like them
- Lack empathy and may even place the blame of their victim's misfortune on the victim
- Difficulty following rules and do not have much respect for authority
- View violence in a positive way/see it as a means to get what they want
By-standers/Up-standers…

- Can experience severe emotions like stress, uncertainty, fear, guilt and academics can be affected
- More than half the time, bullying stops within 10 seconds when a By-stander becomes an Up-stander and steps in to help
- Targets of bullying report that support from Up-standers are more helpful than support from teachers or acting alone
Signs & Symptoms Of Bullying

- Loses interest in schoolwork or begins to do poorly 😞
- To avoid peers is afraid of going to school, taking the school bus or participating in after-school activities, takes a different way to/from school 🚌
- Has few/no friends that s/he spends time with 😞
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches or other physical ailments 🤕
What are the Types of Bullying?

**Physical:** hitting, pushing, spitting

**Social:** spreading rumors, leaving people out of groups or activities

**Cyber bullying:** using internet, cell phones or other digital technologies to bully

**Verbal:** name-calling, teasing, threats, insults
CYBERBULLYING (CYBERSTALKING)…..

Includes, but is not limited to…

Using the internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones to communicate words, images or language directed at specific persons that has the harmful effects…

Section 5.07 Polk County Student Code of Conduct 2015-2016
How Can I Help If My Child Is Being Bullied On-line?

- Do Not Respond
- Save Emails/Messages (Screenshot)
- Delete And Block The Offender And Log Off The Site
- Immediately Report To School Officials (Administration), File An Online Report and/or Contact the POLK COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE, SAFE SCHOOLS 863-534-7309
- Set Limits & Boundaries (Social Media Contract)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If It Is Not Bullying, Then What Is It?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teasing</strong>- everyone is having fun, no one getting hurt, everyone is participating equally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Normal Conflict</strong>- no one is having fun, there is a possible solution to the disagreement, equal balance of power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean moment</strong>- someone is being hurt on purpose, reaction to a strong feeling or emotion, an isolated event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bullying</strong>- someone is being hurt on purpose, unequal balance of power, happens more than once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rough play</strong>- usually friendly &amp; mutual, often will do the same thing again, not about hurting each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fighting</strong>- usually not friends, typically not repeated, power close to equal, trying to hurt each other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teach Your Child To Stand Up To Bullying

- If they feel safe, tell the bully to STOP!
- Empathize and let them know the bullying is wrong
- Help the target walk away
- Support targets by standing next to them
- If the child feels it is unsafe to intervene, they should go to a trusted adult
- ALWAYS GET AN ADULT IF THERE IS VIOLENCE OR A WEAPON
Teach The “Be’s”....
Catch Them “Being” AND
Compliment the Positive “Behavior”

- Be kind (cooperate with others, have a positive attitude)
- Be generous (give your best effort, strive for success)
- Be brave (act responsibly, respect self and others, encourage each other to do better)
Suggestions For Parents

- notice changes in your child’s behavior;
- ask questions e.g., Tell me more about what happened. Has this happened before? Did you tell an adult? Did anyone try to help you?;
- remain calm and reassure your child, “you are right to tell me about this”;
- explain the difference in “tattling” and “telling” to ask for help;
- talk to school administrators, file a report in-person or online;
- determine what your child needs in order to feel and be safe;
Suggestions For Parents, DO NOT:

- ignore the problem;
- blame your child;
- suggest “fighting back”;
- confront the other student(s) or their parents/caregivers;
STUDENTS/PARENTS/STAFF CAN REPORT... IT CAN BE REPORTED ANONYMOUSLY...

You can file a report online at the Polk County School website
http://bullying.polk-fl.net

You can contact your school by phone and report it to school administration

You can make a report in-person and complete the bullying and/or harassment form
ON-LINE REPORTING:

• AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS, STAFF, PARENTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS @ WWW.POLK-FL.NET KEY WORD: BULLYING

• AUTOMATIC NOTIFICATION E-MAIL WILL BE SENT TO PRINCIPAL ONCE A REPORT HAS BEEN FILED
What Happens After Bullying Is Reported?

- Administrators will acknowledge receipt of your report within three (3) school days

- A preliminary review of the incident may be conducted to determine a need for an investigation

- If warranted, an investigation will be conducted and completed within ten (10) school days

- Parents of the target and the bully will be notified of the results for their own child

- Action plans will be developed for the victim and the bully
OPTIONS FOR RESOLUTION

SCHOOL-BASED, MAY INCLUDE BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- Restructure or change schedules
- Pair the targeted student with another child who does not support bullying
- Refer to counseling to learn effective coping skills
- Have check-in/check-out with a trusted adult
- Stay-Away Agreement
- Additional education for students
QUESTIONS?
MORE INFORMATION?

Esperanza de Jesus, LMSW
Lakeland Area

Cheryl Marino, LCSW
South Area

Denise Sepulveda, MSW
North East/Central Area

(863) 534-0930