



Bullying Awareness and Prevention

Bergen County Prosecutor's Office
In Conjunction with the Bergen County Freeholders
County Executive Dennis McNerney
James M. Carroll (Chairman)
Julie O'Brien (Vice Chairwoman)

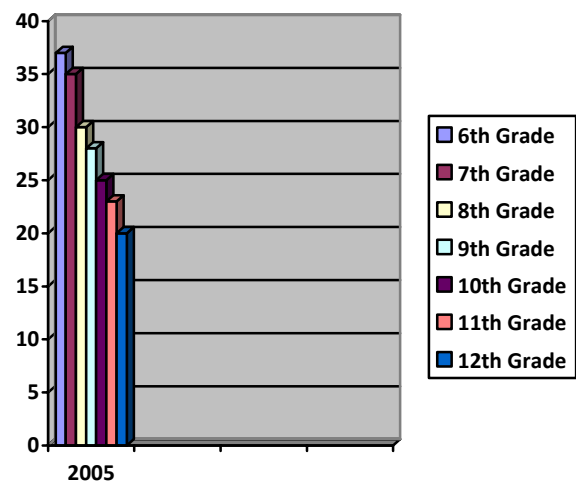
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"Bullying" refers to repeated verbal, physical, emotional or other acts committed by a student to harass, intimidate, or cause harm to another student or group of students.



Bullying is a form of victimization, not conflict. It is an aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Bullying is one form of violence that seems to have increased in recent years, although it is not clear if the increase reflects more incidents of bullying at school or perhaps greater awareness of bullying as a problem



Percentage of students ages 12-18 who reported selected bullying problems at school by grade.

*Source: Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2007
U.S. Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences*

The Facts:

- Bullying is the most enduring and underrated problem in American schools.
- When bullying is ignored, the problem escalates.
- Feeling lonely, humiliated, or unsafe is not a normal part of growing up.
- The consequences of bullying can be long term and serious.
- Certain kinds of bullying break the law and can lead to criminal charges ranging from harassment to assault.
- Bullying should be reported to schools, law enforcement and parents. It should not be ignored.

New Jersey Law

- School districts must have a policy to be followed when an act of bullying occurs.
- All policies must include certain components, such as:
 - a description of the type of behavior expected from each student.
 - the consequences and appropriate **remedial** action for a person who commits an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Symptoms of Bullying:

- *Failing school work*
- *Becoming ill/unexplained illness*
- *Displaying unexpected mood swings or withdrawal*
- *Having trouble concentrating or losing interest in school*
- *Arguing or fighting*
- *Reporting harassment*
- *Displaying suspicious bruises or scratches*
- *Frequently losing money or property*
- *Avoiding lunchtime, recess, social activities or specific groups*
- *Change in attitude about school/loss of desire to attend.*
- *Seclusion from friends and family*
- *Changing friends or social groups*

What to do if you are being bullied:

Tell an adult.
Ask your friends to look out for you.
Tell your teacher.
Stay calm- don't fight back.
Ignore the bully.

As a parent, you should:

Talk to your child.
Monitor your child's behavior.
Report it to the school.
Review your school's mandated bullying policy.
In serious cases, report bullying to the police.
Get counseling for your child.
Document what occurred.



ELEMENTS THAT ARE PART OF A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM THAT PREVENTS OR RESPONDS TO SCHOOL BULLYING:

- A school community committed to promoting a safe and welcoming school for all students.
- Partnerships with key stakeholders.
- District policies that define and promote bully-free schools.
- Curriculum based character education programs.
- School and classroom rules against bullying.
- Teacher and staff training.
- Conflict Resolution Programs, Peer Mediation – Open Circle, Social Decision Making and Problem Solving – Rutgers University.
- On site school wide initiatives and programs.
- Awareness building activities for students and families.
- Support programs for both targets and bullies.

Myths

Bullying is "kids being kids."
Bullying teaches children to be tough.
Bullying will stop on its own.
Bullying only gets worse when reported.