This Citizen Advisory is a publication of the Nassau County Police Department.

For further information on this topic
or to arrange for a lecture at your organization or school,
call the Nassau County Police Department
Community Affairs
at 516-573-7360

EDWARD P. MANGANO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

THOMAS C. KRUMPTER
ACTING COMMISSIONER

Public Advisory

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How Bullying Affects Your Children

A Parent's Guide

Bullying is a serious problem in our schools and on our streets across the country.

Often, a person does not recognize that he/she are being a bully, and many people who are bullied do not know how to speak up for themselves.

The Nassau County Police Department can assist you, the parent, with this serious problem.

Your child?

It is hard to face the fact that your own child may be bullying others or may be the target of a bully. Understanding what bullying is can help your own family and add to the safety of others.

What is bullying?

Bullying occurs when a person or group tries to harm another person who is weaker or more vulnerable. Bullying can include harming someone physically by shoving or punching or mentally by spreading bad rumors, ostracizing, teasing or ganging up on someone, etc. There are even more insidious ways to bully.

Cyber bullying is new and has become a major problem. It is a growing practice that is evolving along with technology. Cyber bullying includes the sending of mean emails, text messages and instant messages and/or the posting of nasty blogs to spread hurtful rumors on the Internet. The harshness of cyber bullying can vary from cruel or embarrassing rumors to threats, harassment or stalking.

Bullying can be illegal

While the New York State penal law does not specifically address bullying, the actions of bullies are often criminal in nature. When bullying becomes harassment, it becomes a police matter for the Nassau County Police Department.

Why do kids bully?

There are a variety of reasons that children bully others. Oftentimes, children become bullies because they believe that their actions will force others to like them. Another reason children may bully others is because they enjoy the sense of power and also feel that they can get away with their behavior. Sometimes, when children bully, they achieve a mindset that they are stronger, smarter or better than the persons they are hurting. Sometimes, children bully to prevent being bullied themselves.

For more information about bullying, visit:

www.nwrel.org/request/dec01/bullying.pdf

www.stopbullyingnow.com ; www.ncpc.org; www.mcgruff.org

Nassau County Police Department

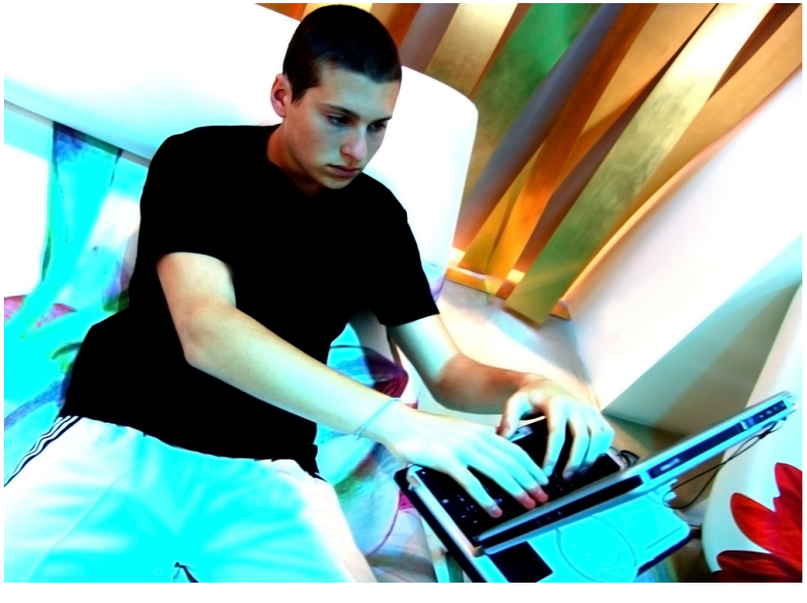
Emergencies **911**

LOCAL PRECINCTS:

FIRST PRECINCT *900 Merrick Road, Baldwin, N.Y. 11510*	**516-573-6100**
SECOND PRECINCT *7700 Jericho Turnpike, Woodbury, N.Y. 11797*	**516-573-6200**
THIRD PRECINCT *214 Hillside Avenue, Williston Park, N.Y. 11596*	**516-573-6300**
FOURTH PRECINCT *1699 Broadway, Hewlett, N.Y. 11557*	**516-573-6400**
COMMUNITY POLICING CENTER *1655 Dutch Broadway, Elmont, N.Y. 11003*	**516-573-6500**
COMMUNITY POLICING CENTER *100 Community Drive, Manhasset, N.Y. 11030*	**516-573-6600**
SEVENTH PRECINCT *3636 Merrick Road, Seaford, N.Y. 11783*	**516-573-6700**
COMMUNITY POLICING CENTER *286 Wantagh Avenue, Levittown, N.Y. 11756*	**516-573-6800**

Helpful tips to prevent bullying (including cyber bullying)

- Do not let your child post personal information on the Internet.
- Limit the number of people who have access to your child's contact information on the Internet.
- Talk to your child and have him/her understand that he/she can always speak with you, a teacher, a sibling, or any responsible adult.
- Discuss resolutions to bullying and how it can be avoided.
- Spend time with your child and do things you both enjoy.
- When neccessary, do not hesitate to contact the Nassau County Police Department (see page 6).



Working together and understanding the issues, you and your child can help put an end to bullying!

Effects of bullying

Bullying is a serious issue of violence that effects the lives of everyone it touches: the bully, the target of the bully and innocent bystanders who are at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Studies show that between 15-25% of students in the United States are bullied with some frequency, while 15-20% report they bully others with some frequency. [1]Young people who bully are more likely than those who do not bully to skip and drop out of school. They are also more likely to smoke, drink alcohol and get into fights. [2] As many as 160,000 students may stay home on any given day because they're afraid of being bullied. [3] Children who bully are more likely to get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school. And 60% of boys who were bullies in middle school had at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24. [4] Almost 30 percent of teens in the United States are estimated to be involved in bullying as either a bully, a target of bullying, or both. In a recent national survey of students in grades six to 10, 13 percent reported bullying others, 11 percent reported being the target of bullies, and another six percent said they bullied others and were bullied themselves. Targets of bullying are more likely to grow up depressed and anxious. Bullies are much more likely than non bullies to become adult criminals.

1. Melton et al, 1988; Nansel et al, 2001
2. Nansel et al, 2003; Olweus, 1993
3. Olweus, 1998
4. Pollack, 1998

What you can do to help your child?

- Encourage your child to feel comfortable sharing problems with you. Make sure your child understands that telling you what is going on is NOT tattling.
- Praise and encourage your child - a confident child is less likely to be bullied.
- Help your child develop new friendships - new peers can provide a new chance.
- Maintain contact with your child's school. Keep a detailed record of bullying episodes and communication with the school.
- Encourage your child to participate in a healthy and social activity that will utilize team building. Being part of a team can help improve self-esteem.
- Be involved in your child's after school activity schedule. Know where your child is, with whom they are spending time, and what they are doing. Being aware of what your child is doing will help to ensure his/her continual safety.
- Encourage your child to join with others, to tell bullies to stop and to warn adults when they are being bullied or see bullying.
- Praise your child when he or she does these things, reminding your child that he or she has the power to help.
- If you believe there is a problem, immediately inform your child's school. If the problem does not subside or escalates to a point of fear, allow the police to get involved.

What to do if your child is being bullied

Blaming your child for being bullied is not helpful and can be detrimental. Blaming your child will make your child feel even worse than he or she already feels from the bullying. Weigh what you are going to say. Take into account that your child has most probably heard general information on bullying so do not be afraid to bring it to a personal level. Get the details about what happened from your child and make sure someone at school such as a teacher or counselor knows about the bullying that is taking place. Ask your child what he or she has done to try and stop the bully and together come up with practical solutions to help end the violence taking place. Always let your child's school know about what is going on. If there is an issue, the school should know so they can help to fix the problem.

The characteristics of a bully

- Aggressive behavior towards teachers, parents, siblings peers.
- Impulsive and easily frustrated.
- Witnesses violence at home, on the street, in movies, video games or the like.
- Often has a dominant personality.
- Lacks nurturing and supervision at home.
- Has little to no insecurities, emotion, anxiety.
- Uses violence as a tool of power
- Likes to have control, prestige and sometimes material goods.

How to recognize a bullying victim

- Often defenseless.
- Weak or helpless in certain positions.
- Physically smaller and/or weaker than peers.
- Characterized as sensitive and quiet, cries a lot.
- Often made to think he or she is stupid, unattractive, a failure.
- Often has little to no social skills.
- Sometimes depressed or sulking.
- Often has low self-esteem.
- Socially isolated.
- May have anxiety condition.