

Bullying Message to Parents

Question: Is Your Child a Victim of Bullying?

Bullying and harassment of any kind are simply not tolerated. Evidence of emotional issues such as bullying often go un-noticed as each student progress from class to class and are in front of as many as 10 teachers in one day. Bullying often is not revealed during academic time. Passing periods are 2 – 3 minutes long with all 250+ students passing at once. Lunchroom supervisors observe all 250+ students having lunch at the same time. Class periods are 41 minutes long often with 25 – 30 students in each classroom. As much as your child’s teachers look for evidence of bullying, most goes un-noticed or un-seen.

Most children will not tell their parents if they are being bullied because they are afraid that their parents will somehow blame them or that word will get out that they “told” and the bullies will heap even more abuse on them. But parents can look for certain suspicious indicators:

Unexplained reluctance to go to school

Fearfulness or unusual anxiety

Sleep disturbances and nightmares

Vague physical complaints, such as headaches or stomachaches, especially on school days

Belongings that are “lost” or come home damaged

If you suspect your child may be a victim, do not ask him or her directly. You might ask your child such questions as: “What goes on during lunch hour?”

“What is it like waiting for the school bus or riding the bus?” “Are there any children who do not get along on the bus? In school?”

Be a good listener. Allow your child time to explain how he or she feels. Make sure these are times and/or locations where you are alone and will not be distracted or interrupted. For example, do not answer your cell phone during this conversation or alone time with them, as if you do they will perceive this conversation as non-important to you and take this on themselves. If you suspect your child may be a victim, state clearly that it is not his or her fault. Then ask yourself if the events are serious enough to discuss with a teacher they are comfortable with, or their principal, or even the police. Adapted from “Parents’

Primer on School Bullying” by Richard B. Goldbloom. Readers Digest Canada Online March 9, 2005.