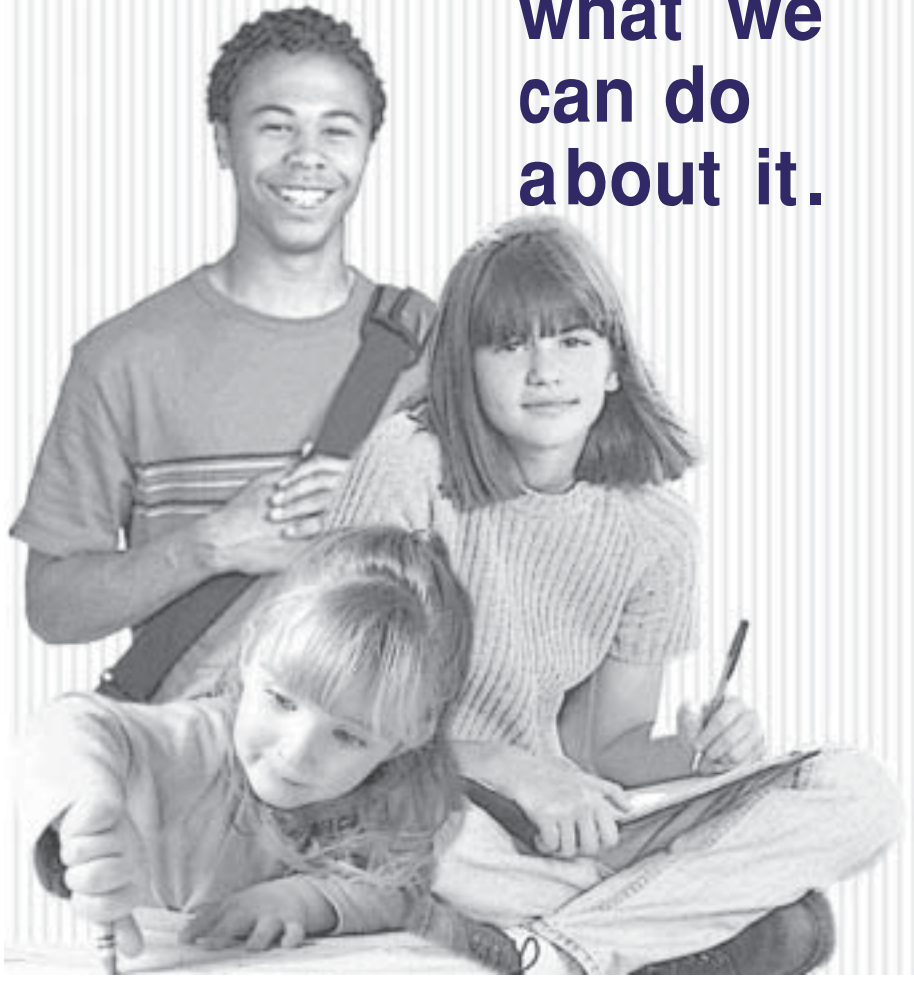




# Bullying – What it is, what we can do about it.



The South Colonie  
Safe Schools Committee



**Bullying:  
what it is,  
what we can  
do about it.**

**Elementary  
Schools**

Forest Park, K-4  
*100 Forest Drive  
869-3006*

Roessleville, K-4  
*100 California Avenue  
459-2157*

Saddlewood, K-4  
*100 Loralee Drive  
456-2608*

Shaker Road, K-4  
*512 Shaker Road  
458-1440*

Veeder, K-4  
*25 Veeder Drive  
869-4661*

**Middle Schools**

Lisha Kill, 5-8  
*68 Waterman Avenue  
456-2306*

Sand Creek, 5-8  
*329 Sand Creek Road  
459-1333*

**High School**

Colonie Central, 9-12  
*1 Raider Boulevard  
459-1220*

**Alternative  
School**

Central Avenue  
Learning Center  
*1653 Central Avenue  
869-6784*



# Introduction:

*Dear South Colonie Students, Parents, Staff and Community,*

*The South Colonie Central School District formed the Safe Schools Committee as part of the district's commitment to maintaining safe and welcoming schools and in response to the New York State S.A.V.E. legislation requiring schools to address school safety and character, civility and citizenship.*

*We believe that the elimination of bullying in our schools and community is the collective responsibility of families, the school district and the entire community. The purpose of this pamphlet is to provide information about bullying and South Colonie's efforts to remove any kind of intimidation or harassment from our school environment. The contents of the pamphlet will be updated periodically to reflect new insights and strategies for dealing with bullying and its impact on students.*

*Sincerely,*

**The Safe Schools  
Committee**



## Anti-Bullying

### MISSION STATEMENT ▼

The South Colonie Central School District strongly supports a school climate that is safe and welcoming to all students. The district recognizes that physical, emotional and social bullying, harassment or intimidation can jeopardize students' academic achievement and undermine their physical and emotional well-being and may provoke retaliatory violence.

For these reasons, the South Colonie Central School District is committed to working towards eliminating bullying/harassment with a strong immediate response to any bullying/harassment incident, taking disciplinary action, providing emotional and psychological support for the victim, counseling intervention for the bully, maintaining procedures for conflict resolution, publicizing reporting procedures, monitoring school climate and insuring that curriculum and pedagogical strategies foster respect.

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# Overview:

For far too long, bullying has been minimized as a normal component of childhood and adolescence. Yet for targets and children who bully alike, bullying can lead to lifelong problems. Depression, substance abuse, and relationship problems are common not only for kids who are targeted, but for kids who bully.



## HERE ARE THE FACTS ▼

- Bullying is one of the most underrated and serious problems in schools today.
- Bullying is most intense during the middle school years.
- Most bullying occurs in or around school buildings.
- Both targets and children who bully suffer significant emotional, behavioral, and underachievement problems.
- Twenty-two percent of fourth through eighth graders report academic problems due to bullying.
- The National Association of School Psychologists and the U.S. Department of Justice estimate that 160,000 students miss school every day because they are in fear of being bullied.
- Boys are more likely to bully physically, and girls are more likely to use taunts and spread rumors.
- There is little, if any, difference between bullying in suburban, rural or inner city schools.
- Fourteen percent of students experience severe reactions to bullying and may have lifelong psychiatric consequences.
- By age 24, sixty percent of children who bully will have a criminal conviction.
- Bullying-which includes verbal and physical abuse, social alienation, and intimidation by peers-can be decreased by effective and consistent school-wide bullying awareness and prevention programs.

# Definitions:

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**Bullying** is comprised of direct behaviors such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing that are initiated by one or more students against a victim. In addition to direct attacks, bullying may also be more indirect by causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion. While boys typically engage in direct bullying methods, girls who bully are more apt to utilize these more subtle indirect strategies, such

as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation. Whether the bullying is direct or indirect, the key component of bullying is that the physical or psychological intimidation occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse.

**Bullying is the assertion of power through aggression.** Its forms change with age: playground bullying, sexual harassment, gang attacks, date violence, assault, marital violence, child abuse, workplace harassment, and elder abuse.

**Bullies acquire power over their victims in many ways;** by physical size and strength, by status within the peer group, by knowing the victim's weaknesses, or by recruiting support from other children, as in group bullying. With repeated bullying, the bully's dominance over the victim is established and the victim becomes increasingly distressed and fearful.



# Characteristics of Bullies:

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Students who engage in bullying behaviors seem to have a need to feel powerful and in control. They appear to derive satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering on others. They seem to have little empathy for their victims, and they often defend their actions by saying that their victims provoked them in some way. Studies indicate that bullies often come from homes where physical punishment is used, where the children are taught to strike back physically as a way to handle problems, and where parental involvement and warmth are frequently lacking. Students who regularly display bullying behaviors are generally defiant or oppositional toward adults, antisocial, and apt to break school rules. In contrast to prevailing myths, bullies appear to have little anxiety and to possess strong self-esteem. There is little evidence to support the contention that they victimize others because they feel badly about themselves.



## **GENDER**

On surveys, more boys report bullying than girls, but the discrepancy between boys' and girls' rates of bullying is not as great in playground observations. Boys report more physical forms of bullying; girls tend to bully in indirect ways, such as gossiping and excluding.

## **AGE**

In Canadian surveys, 11 to 12 year old students reported bullying others more than 9 to 10 year olds or 13 to 14 year old students.

## **TEMPERAMENT**

Bullies tend to be hyperactive, disruptive, impulsive, and overactive.

## **AGGRESSION**

Bullies are generally aggressive toward their peers, teachers, parents, siblings, and others.

Bullies tend to be assertive and easily provoked. They are attracted to situations with aggressive content and have positive attitudes about aggression.

**PHYSICAL STRENGTH**

Boys who bully are physically stronger and have a need to dominate others. In contrast, girls who bully tend to be physically weaker than other girls in their class.

**LACK OF EMPATHY**

Bullies have little empathy for their victims and show little or no remorse about bullying.

*Characteristics of*  
**Victims:**

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Students who are victims of bullying are typically anxious, insecure, cautious, and suffer from low self-esteem, rarely defining themselves or retaliating when confronted by students who bully them. They may lack social skills and friends, and they are often socially isolated. Victims tend to be close to their parents and may have parents who can be described as overprotective. The major defining physical characteristic of victims is that they tend to



be physically weaker than their peers – other physical characteristics such as weight, dress, or wearing eyeglasses do not appear to be significant factors that can be correlated with victimization.

**AGE**

Victimization decreases across grade levels; twenty-six percent of grades 1-3 children report victimization compared to fifteen percent of grades 4-6 and twelve percent of grades 7-8 children. Children in lower grades are more likely to be victims of older bullies, whereas children in higher grades are more likely to be victims of same-age bullies. Younger students experience more direct bullying, whereas

older students experience more indirect bullying.

### **TEMPERAMENT**

Some victimized children have a tendency to be anxious and withdrawn. There is more evidence of this among pre-school children than among school-aged children.

### **PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

Research has not supported the popular stereotype that victims have unusual physical traits.

### **SELF-ESTEEM**

Victims often report low self-esteem, likely because of repeated exposure to victimization.

### **DEPRESSION**

Both boys and girls who are victimized report symptoms of depression such as sadness and loss of interest in activities.

### **ANXIETY**

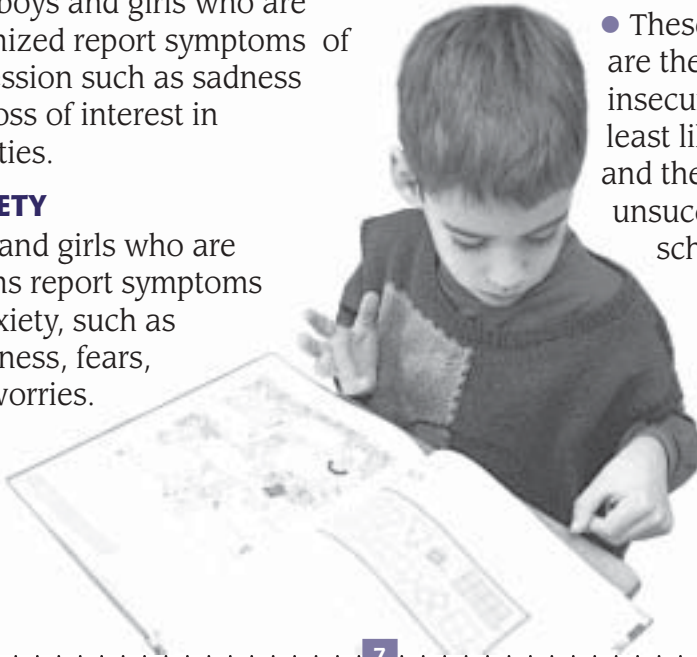
Boys and girls who are victims report symptoms of anxiety, such as tenseness, fears, and worries.

## *Characteristics of* **Bully/Victims:**

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Children who both bully and are victimized have been called bully/victims. There is a controversy about whether this classification is justified. On surveys, a small group of children admit being both bullies and victims (two percent and six percent of the Canadian and British samples, respectively). In contrast, peer ratings and research observations indicate that almost half of the children who are victims are also bullies and visa versa. There is limited research on the characteristics of bully/victims.

- These children are the most insecure, the least likable, and the most unsuccessful in school.



- Bully/victims are often strong and easily provoked.
- Children who are bully/victims appear to be at the greatest risk for adjustment difficulties.

Research is needed to determine how children become bully/victims. Some victims may turn to bullying out of anger and frustration; conversely, some bullies may become victimized by their peers.

## **Roles of Peers** *in Bullying* :

**B**ullying usually involves more than the bully and the victim. Eighty-five percent of bullying episodes occur in the context of a peer group.



Observations indicate that peers assume many roles in the bullying episode: joining in, cheering, passively watching, and occasionally intervening. Peers who form the audience for bullying may be critical in starting and supporting it.

- Peers tend to give positive attention to the bully, rather than the victim. Their reinforcement of the bully may serve to maintain the bully's power over the victim and within the peer group. The bully may also affect the peers who are watching.
- Peers who watch bullying may become excited and more likely to join in.
- Compared to girls, boys are more likely to be drawn into bullying episodes and become actively involved in the bullying. Through intervening, peers may also stop and reduce bullying.
- In playground observations, peers intervened in significantly more episodes than adults did.

## What Schools Can Do

# *What Schools Can Do About Bullying* :

by Ken Rigby

- ☑ Express disapproval of bullying whenever it occurs, not only in the classroom but also on the school playground.
- ☑ Listen sympathetically to students who need support when they are victimized, and often initiate or take action according to procedures approved by the school.
- ☑ Encourage cooperative learning in the classroom and setting a good example with their own behavior.
- ☑ Talk with groups of students about bullying, and mobilize students' support for action to reduce bullying- for example, by including victimized students in their activities. "Most students are in fact against bullying," Rigby says, "and, given the chance, can provide not only active support for the school policy but also make positive proposals and undertake constructive actions to counter bullying."

## **SAFE SCHOOLS:**

1. Are free from violence
2. Are nurturing, caring and respectful of everyone
3. Are physically and psychologically healthy
4. Promote sensible risk taking
5. Enhance the self-esteem of all

## What Students Can Do

Students are likely to support an Anti-Bullying campaign when they have been directly involved in determining the need for such a program, and deciding on its implementation. This includes developing Anti-Bullying policies and subsequent school-wide or classroom activities. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that they accept and encourage.

When it comes to discipline or punishment issues, most students strongly believe in fairness and therefore wel-

## What Teachers Can Do

Teachers need to be sensitive to the fact that the level of student participation in the Anti-Bullying campaign will vary. Once students are mobilized to take action against bullies, they must feel secure that teachers understand their need to stay safe. For some students this means ensuring that the information they share will not cause them to lose status in their peer group. Confidentiality must be maintained in order for the program to be viewed by the students as credible.

### STRATEGIES

- Provide students with opportunities to talk about bullying and enlist their support in defining bullying as unacceptable behavior.
- Involve students in establishing classroom rules against bullying. Such rules may include a commitment from the teacher to not “look the other way” when incidents involving bullying occur.
- Provide discussions related to bullying and violence, including the harm that they cause and strategies to reduce them.



come Anti-Bullying policies that encourage treating others with care and respect.

Students are key to a successful Anti-Bullying campaign primarily because they usually know who the bullies are long before the adults do.

As well, to help students actively participate and take on the challenge of reducing bullying, it is very important they learn the difference between “ratting” and “reporting”. “Ratting” occurs when a student tells about an inappropriate act with the idea of getting another student into trouble with the administration. “Reporting” happens when a student tells to protect the safety of another student. Once students have an understanding of the difference between the two, reporting bullying incidents becomes much less of a social taboo.

- Develop a classroom action plan to ensure that students know what to do when they observe a bully/victim confrontation.
- Take immediate action when bullying is observed. All teachers and school staff must let children know that they care and will not allow anyone to be mistreated. By taking immediate action and dealing directly with the bully, adults support both the victim and the witnesses.
- Confront bullies in private. Challenging a bully in front of his/her peers may actually enhance his/her status and lead to further aggression.
- Notify the parents of both victims and bullies when a confrontation occurs, and seek to resolve the problems expeditiously at school.
- Send both victims and aggressors to counseling whenever appropriate.
- Provide protection for bullying victims, whenever necessary.
- Avoid attempts to mediate a bullying situation. The difference in power between victims and bullies may cause victims to feel further

victimized by the process or believe they are somehow at fault.

## What Families Can Do

Bullies may come from homes that are neglectful, and hostile and use harsh punishment. Bullying may be learned by observing high levels of conflict between parents. Care needs to be taken by parents so that they do not model bullying for their children.

Parents may inadvertently support bullying by accepting it as just a normal part of growing up and leaving children to solve their own problems.

Victims often keep their problems a secret: they feel they should handle bullying themselves; they worry about the bully's revenge or other children's disapproval; and/or they think adults can do little to help them.

When they are courageous enough to tell, victims talk more often to parents than to teachers. As their children's most important advocates, parents must support their victimized children by working with the school to ensure their children's safety.



## How to "Bully Proof"

*If you're being bothered by a bully, try using one of the **HA-HA-SO** strategies:*

**H**elp. Get it or give it.

**A**sert. "Stop making fun of me. It's mean and unfair. Stop it."

**H**umor. "Yes this is an ugly shirt. My grandma always does this to me."

**A**void. Walk away.

**S**elf-talk. "I know I'm not really ugly."

**O**wn it. "You're right, I am a Native American. Do you want to know what our culture is really like?"

# Resources:



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# **SOUTH COLONIE**



## **South Colonie**

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[www.southcolonieschools.org](http://www.southcolonieschools.org)

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