

# UNITED *in Kindness Coalition* TO STOP BULLYING



United Way of Frederick County

## BULLYING NOUN | BULLY-ING

What is Bullying? BULLYING is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

**An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

**Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### **My child has been bullied, what do I do first?**

- ▶ Listen, in a non-judgmental way, about what is happening with your child.
- ▶ Let them do the talking and try to get more information from them by asking open-ended questions such as, "What happened? How did that make you feel?"
- ▶ Try to find out more about the individual(s) who are making your child feel afraid and upset.
- ▶ Ask your child if they told the classroom teacher or anyone at the school about what has been happening or if anyone (teacher, classmate) saw it happening.
- ▶ Discuss next steps with your child. This should include the steps you are going to take as well as planning with them what they are going to do and where they are going to go if it happens again.
- ▶ Call or email your child's School Counselor to share the information and to give the counselor permission to meet with your child to discuss the situation.
- ▶ Complete a FCPS Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Reporting Form. The form can be found on [www.fcps.org/student-services/forms](http://www.fcps.org/student-services/forms) under Student Services.
  - 1 If you complete an online form, email the School Counselor or Principal to let the school know that you did submit the form.
  - 2 If you print and complete a form, deliver or send it to the School Counselor or Principal.

## When can I expect to hear from the school?

- ▶ Per FCPS Regulation 400-48, the school principal, or designee, will initiate the investigation of student complaints as timely as possible, ideally within two days.
- ▶ The school administrator completing the investigation is required to contact the parent/guardian of the target and the parent/guardian of the alleged offender.
- ▶ If a parent/guardian does not receive feedback within five (5) school days, they should contact the administrator to follow-up on the report.

## How long can I expect it to take until the situation has been resolved?

- ▶ Each situation is different and there is no way to provide a set timeline for an investigation into bullying to be completed. Some incidents require interviews of multiple witnesses. Student interviews take time and all administrators are encouraged to complete a thorough investigation. Investigations are dependent on a number of variables (student attendance, administrative meetings, and school-based activities) that may impact the timeliness of the process.
- ▶ School staff takes steps to ensure each student's safety while the investigation is being completed. School counselors intervene and work with the student target and the alleged offender throughout the investigation.

## What do I do if the bullying does not stop?

- ▶ When an investigation is completed and the incident meets the definition of bullying, the offender is required to participate in an activity designed by the school administrator, counselor or school team to educate, sensitize and instill openness and tolerance within approximately two weeks after the investigation.
- ▶ Interventions are not always successful in changing the behavior of an individual. If the bullying continues, parents/guardians and students must complete a Report of Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation each time an incident occurs. The school cannot continue to intervene and address incidents if they are not aware that they are occurring.
- ▶ While the counselor is always available to students, they are required to meet with the target and offender two (2) weeks after the incident and again four (4) weeks after the incident to ensure that bullying behaviors have stopped.

## Why can't I find out what happened to the "bully" once I file a complaint?

- ▶ The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal privacy law that gives parents certain protections with regard to their children's education records, such as report cards, transcripts, disciplinary records, contact and family information, and class schedules.
- ▶ Schools are required to keep each student's Personally Identifiable Information confidential.
- ▶ Administrators follow disciplinary steps outlined in FCPS Regulation 400-08.

## What is being done to create a safe environment?

- ▶ FCPS Aspirational Goal 5 promotes a culture fostering wellness and civility for students and staff, with the priorities of promoting and maintaining a safe and respectful environment and fostering personal well-being and health among students and staff through increased awareness and engagement on these topics.
- ▶ FCPS schools implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Restorative Practices, Character Counts!, Rachel's Challenge/Kindness Clubs, Zones of Regulation, Character Playbook and other resources to promote the social and emotional development of all students.
- ▶ The needs of each individual student and each school are different, so the approach to creating a safe environment may look different in each school.
- ▶ Positive working relationships between schools and families enhances the social emotional learning of all children.

## Teachers are required to report child abuse, is there any requirements for reporting bullying?

Per FCPS Regulation 400-48, "All school employees who observe, receive reports of, overhear, or otherwise witness bullying, intimidation, or harassment or to whom such harassment is reported shall take prompt and appropriate action."

## What happens if my child is bullied on the bus?

The bus driver must be informed of the bullying. Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to complete a Report of Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation each time an incident occurs.

## For the full text of regulations referenced above visit [www.fcps.org/boe/policies](http://www.fcps.org/boe/policies)

### Call 2-1-1 for assistance or visit these websites with additional information

[www.unitedwayfrederick.org/stopbullying](http://www.unitedwayfrederick.org/stopbullying)  
[www.fcmha.org](http://www.fcmha.org)  
[www.fcps.org/academics/stop-bullying](http://www.fcps.org/academics/stop-bullying)  
[www.stopbullyingnow.com](http://www.stopbullyingnow.com)  
[www.thebullyproject.com](http://www.thebullyproject.com)  
[www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)  
[www.rachelschallenge.org](http://www.rachelschallenge.org)

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A Community Response to Stop Bullying in Frederick County