

Bullying can threaten students' physical and emotional safety at school and can negatively impact their ability to learn. The best way to address bullying is to stop it before it starts. There are a number of things the Waterford Township school staff can do to make schools safer and prevent bullying.

We in the Waterford Township Schools are assessing school prevention and intervention efforts around student behavior. After analyzing data, we will build upon an integrate bullying prevention strategies. Many programs help address the same protective and risk factors that bullying programs do.

It is important for everyone in the community to work together to send a unified message against bullying. Our schools will be launching an awareness campaign to make the objectives known to the school, parents, and community members. We have established school safety committees to plan, implement, and evaluate our bullying prevention program.

Our schools are trying to establish a school culture of acceptance, tolerance and respect while also establishing a positive climate at school. Additionally, our staff are huge fans of positive social interactions and inclusiveness.

Bullying Definition

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.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

There are three types of bullying:

- Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
 - Teasing
 - Name-calling
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Taunting
 - Threatening to cause harm
- Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
 - Leaving someone out on purpose
 - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
 - Spreading rumors about someone
 - Embarrassing someone in public
- Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
 - Hitting/kicking/pinching
 - Spitting
 - Tripping/pushing
 - Taking or breaking someone's things
 - Making mean or rude hand gestures

Where and When Bullying Happens

Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places like on the playground or the bus. It can also happen traveling to or from school, in the youth's neighborhood, or on the Internet.

www.wrightslaw.com/info/discipl.bully.prevent.htm