

SPOTLIGHT ON: BULLYING

You probably remember being picked on or teased at some point in your youth; it was generally seen as part of growing up. But the world is different today. Too many of today's students are dealing with bullies during and after school, as well as online—which can be 24/7.

IS YOUR CHILD BEING BULLIED?

Many children don't tell their parents they are being bullied because they're embarrassed, afraid, or worried their parents will overreact. This is why it's so important to pay attention to warning signs such as the following:

- ▶ Suddenly more anxious, quiet, shy, or insecure
- ▶ Loss of appetite or complaints of illness
- ▶ Not wanting to go to school / drop in grades
- ▶ Withdrawn or depressed / unexplained injuries

IF YOUR CHILD IS A TARGET

If your child is being harassed or bullied, listen carefully and be supportive. Have your child explain what happened, who was involved, how often it occurred, when, and where. Make printouts of anything sent or posted online. Once you have the facts, consider how to best help your child.

Here are a few ideas:

- ▶ Encourage your child to stand up to whoever is bothering him/her and tell the bully to stop.
- ▶ Encourage your child to ignore the bully and walk away. (Bullies are looking for a reaction and often get bored if they don't get one.)
- ▶ Talk to your child's teacher or principal about what is happening and ask for their help and advice.

IF YOUR CHILD IS A BULLY

If you learn that your child has been bothering or harassing another student, take it seriously and don't make excuses. Avoid lecturing, criticizing, or blaming. Be firm, focus on solutions, and hold your child accountable for his/her actions.

