

What Parents Should Know About Bullying

Bullying among children is aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength. A child who is being bullied has a hard time defending him or herself. Usually bullying is repeated over time. Bullying can take many forms such as physical, verbal, emotional and cyber bullying.

Signs that your child might be bullied:

- torn clothes
- loss of appetite
- mood changes
- reluctance to go to school
- bruises or injuries that can't be explained

Signs that your child might be engaging in bullying behavior:

- impulsiveness
- no empathy for others
- a desire to be in control
- may be an arrogant and boastful winner and poor loser in competitive games

Richmond County School's Anti-Bullying Policy

The Richmond County School System has an Anti-Bullying Policy that prohibits bullying of or by any district student or employee. It is important that parents become familiar with the policy. To ask any questions, please contact your child's school or the Richmond County School System at 706-826-1000.

What to do if you suspect your child is being bullied:

Talk with your child. Be supportive and gather information about the bullying.

Report suspected bullying to your child's school. You may make an anonymous report by going to www.RCBOE.ORG under parent resources. Anonymous reports can also occur by calling the School System's Central Office at 706-826-1000.

What Parents Should Know About Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying occurs when children or teens use the internet, cell phones or other devices to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass other children or teens. This can include sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images; posting sensitive, private information about another person; or pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad. Children and teens can cyber bully each other through e-mails, instant messaging, text messages, web pages, blogs or chat rooms.

Tips to help prevent cyber bullying:

- keep your computer in easily viewable places
- talk regularly with your child about on-line activities that he or she is involved in

- tell your child that you may review his or her on-line communications if you think there is reason for concern
- consider installing parental control filtering software and/or tracking programs
- educate your child about the consequences of inappropriate use of his or her electronics, such as losing internet access or use of their cell phone

Tips for dealing with cyber bullying that your child has experienced:

- strongly encourage your child not to respond to the cyber bullying
- do not erase the messages or pictures (save these as evidence)
- try to identify the individual doing the cyber bullying
- consider filing a complaint with your service provider
- contact your child's school
- contact the police if cyber bullying involves acts such as threats of violence, extortion, obscene or harassing phone calls or text messages, harassment, stalking, hate crimes or child pornography