

Few circumstances are more frustrating for parents and family than when their child is the target of a bully. Nobody wishes his or her child to be bullied. You shouldn't have to put up with it, nor should your child. Sometimes it's difficult to spot because your son or daughter keeps it hidden from you but their distress is total.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, racial, emotional or sexual. It happens at any age from nursery school through college, and may even continue in the work place. You must stop it early. Bullying can result in depression, low self-esteem, shyness, poor academic achievement and isolation. In the worst possible cases, a threatened or attempted suicide may occur. Your child's quality of life should not be subject to the whim or brutality of another.



### RESOURCES

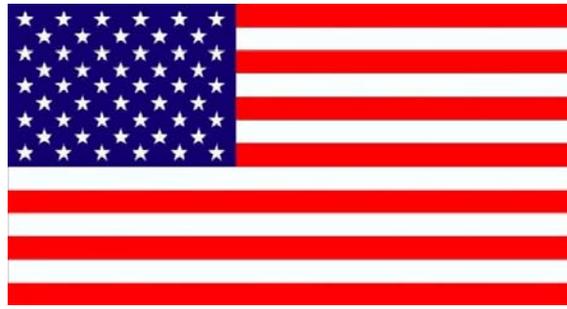
PORT ST. LUCIE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
[www.cityofpsl.com/police](http://www.cityofpsl.com/police)

STATE OF FLORIDA  
[www.myflorida.com](http://www.myflorida.com)

FLORIDA DEPT. OF EDUCATION  
[www.fldoe.org/safeschools/bullying.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/safeschools/bullying.asp)

U.S. DEPT. OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
<http://www.hrsa.gov>

CYBERBULLYING RESEARCH CENTER  
[www.cyberbullying.us](http://www.cyberbullying.us)



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COURAGE,  
KNOWLEDGE,  
INTEGRITY

# BULLYING AND CYBER BULLYING



# PUT A STOP TO IT

WORKING TOGETHER FOR  
A SAFER COMMUNITY

## Possible Signs Of Bullying

Children may be frightened of walking to or from school, change their usual route, not want to go on the school bus, beg you to drive them to school, be unwilling to go out to play, feel ill in the mornings, begin truanting, begin doing poorly in their school work, come home regularly with clothes or books destroyed, become withdrawn, start stammering, lack confidence, become distressed and anxious, attempt or threaten suicide, cry themselves to sleep, have some of their possessions go missing, ask for money or start stealing money (to pay off bullies), continually lose their pocket money, have unexplained cuts scratches, bruises, cuts, even begin to bully other children themselves! They may become aggressive and unreasonable and give improbable excuses to explain any of the above.



## Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is defined as the use of the internet, cell phones or other electronic devices to send or post messages and images with the intent to hurt, embarrass or harass another person.

Kids report being mean to each other online as early as the 2nd grade. According to research, boys initiate mean online activity earlier than girls do. However, by middle school, girls are more likely to engage in cyber bullying than boys.



Cyber bullies target their victims by ganging up on them and making them the subject of ridicule in social and public forums. This is commonly done by a posting or sending false, as well as factual statements, intended to cause humiliation. They will disclose the personal data of the targeted victim on a website for the purpose of defaming or ridiculing that intended target.

Cyber bullying may also include threats and sexual remarks. Though these may be present it is not the same as sexual harassment and may not necessarily involve a sexual offender or predator.

The impact of cyber bullying can be just as devastating as verbal or physical abuse, so address it immediately by instructing your child to avoid responding, rather save and print statement for future documentation. Don't let it thrive or continue.



## How You Can Help Your Child

If you have any concern, ask your child directly. Bullied children are often embarrassed or frightened to tell what is happening to them so be prepared for your child to deny anything wrong is occurring.

Take what your child says seriously. Explain that you are concerned and want to help. Don't promise to keep the bullying a secret, but reassure your child that you will help them sort out the problem.



Bullying damages self-confidence so you must rebuild it. Keep telling your child you love them very much and you are 100% on their side. Explain that the bullying is not their fault and reacting to bullies by crying or getting upset, only encourages them. Bullies usually move on from boredom if they do not get the response they are seeking.

Try to minimize opportunities for bullying by not carrying valuable possessions and not being the last one to leave the classroom, locker room or the playground. Staying close to a group, even if they are not your friends, could be helpful.

Always make time for you child and praise them frequently. Provide opportunities for your child to excel and do well. Encourage them to develop hobbies or to get involved in some type of sporting activity.

