



Fact Sheet

Take action to stop bullying

Many students headed back to school have a very real fear of being bullied. Bullying goes beyond aggressive behavior or fist-fights. It can include any unwanted behavior that involves a power imbalance and is repeated over time. Bullying can include threats, rumors, physical attack, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, exclusion, cyber-attacks, or texting. Bullying can threaten a child's 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. Many schools are proactively working to prevent bullying, and parents can also play an important role.

1. **Pay attention.** Watch for warning signs of bullying, such as unexplained injuries, a change in appetite, missing personal items, or a reluctance to go to school. Be aware that some kids may make a great effort to hide the signs of bullying. Talk with your kids every day, using open-ended questions that encourage conversation.
2. **Don't ignore it.** Never assume a situation is harmless teasing. What one person considers harmless may be humiliating and devastating to another. Get involved if you think there may be a problem, don't just brush it off as kids being kids. Some children never recover from bullying. It affects them for a lifetime.
3. **Talk to your children.** Children can play an active role in preventing bullying. Encourage them to promote respect and inclusion at school by being a friend. Teach them to set a good example and to not give bullies an audience. Urge them to help kids get away from bullies and talk with a trusted adult.

Learn more about how you can prevent bullying by visiting www.phelpscountyhealth.com, Facebook, Twitter, or by calling (573) 458-6010. The Phelps/Maries County Health Department – caring for your family, caring for our community, caring for YOU!



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