

## **Middle School Bullying**

Despite school systems' zero tolerance policies, bullying still occurs and approximately one out of every four middle school children are the target of it. According to the [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov) website, bullying is behavior that is both aggressive and repetitive or potentially repetitive. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or both. It can also take the form of intentionally leaving a child out of social activities.

This article presents facts about bullying and how parents can help their children either prevent or end bullying.

## **Middle School Bullying Facts**

According to a 2011 National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) report, 28% of students ages 12 – 18 reported being bullied during the school year. Middle school bullying (grades 6 – 8) was more pervasive than senior high school bullying and more likely to result in physical injury to students. Following are additional facts found on [dosomething.org](http://dosomething.org):

- Every year over 3.2 million students are bullied.
- Approximately 160,000 students skip school each day because of bullying.
- 56 percent of students have observed some type of bullying.
- Over two-thirds of students believe that school staff does not handle bullying well.
- Repeated bullying accounts for 10% of school drop outs.
- 75 percent of school gun-related violence incidents have been linked to bullying.

## **Middle School Bullying Effects**

According to [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov), children who are the frequent targets of bullying are more likely to:

- Suffer from depression and anxiety.
- Experience sleep and eating pattern changes.
- Lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed.
- Have chronic health issues.
- Show decreases in GPA, standardized test scores, and participation in extracurricular school activities.

In very rare cases, bullied children might retaliate with extreme violence.

## **Middle School Bullying Risk Factors**

According to [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov), there are risk factors that make some children more likely to be targets of bullying:

- Being obese or skinny
- Wearing uncool clothing or glasses
- Appearing weak or defenseless
- Having low self-esteem
- Not getting along well with others

Students who have the above risk factors are not necessarily going to be bullied.

## **Middle School Bullying Prevention**

Since the effects of middle school bullying may last well after the bullying ends and even into adulthood, prevention is very important. There is a wide variety of prevention techniques and strategies. Parents play an important role in helping their children decide what might work best for them. Here's how [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov) recommends parents can help their children prevent bullying.

- Talk to children about what bullying is, be sure they understand it's unacceptable, and encourage them to:
  - Report the bullying to a teacher, parent, or trusted adult.
  - Use safety strategies, such as staying near adults or with groups of students.
  - Help others who are being bullied.
- Encourage your children to talk about their day at school. Some children may be embarrassed to admit that they are being bullied. Following are some questions that you can ask your children to get the conversation going and uncover a potential bullying issue:
  - What was one good thing that happened today? Any bad things?
  - Who do you sit with at lunch? What do you talk about?
  - What is it like to ride the school bus? Anything out of the ordinary happen on today's bus ride?
  - What are you good at? What do you like best about yourself?
- Encourage children to do what they love. Being involved in activities they enjoy help children make friends and become part of groups that protect them from bullying.
- Treat others with kindness and respect, so children learn appropriate, non-bullying behavior by example.

## **Middle School Bullying Response**

If parents learn that their children are the targets of bullying, here are some tips that they can share with them to stop it when it happens again.

- Tell the bully to stop in a clear, calm voice.
- Walk away.
- Do not fight back.
- Get help from a teacher or other adult at the school.

Parents should also advise children to stay away from places where bullying occurs and stay near adults and friendly groups of children, whenever possible.

If children are unable to end the bullying on their own, parents should contact a teacher, the school principal, or a school counselor to get assistance.

## **Conclusion**

Middle school bullying can be a physical and emotional threat to children and impact their ability to learn. Parents play a key role in preventing and ending bullying of their children. They should use the information in this article and conduct their own research to do so.

If you are being bullied Contact the:

1. Teacher
2. School counselor
3. School Assistant Principal

Reference: <https://nobullying.com/middle-school-bullying-a-parents-guide/>

Resources:

<http://www.stompoutbullying.org/index.php/information-and-resources/>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources>