

| background |

We can all help prevent bullying

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At the Calgary Board of Education we are committed to having safe and caring schools—schools where students feel they belong and have connections to trusted adults, schools where kids know they are cared for every day.

Nov. 13 to 19 is National Bullying Awareness Week. At the CBE we want every week to be anti-bullying week but for this one week, let's focus on the ways we can work together to make our kids safe—and feel safe.

Let's work together to make sure that bullying behaviour isn't accepted—but let's also recognize that kids aren't born bullies. They've learned that behaviour, often from adults. So let's work together to teach them there are other ways to interact, to communicate and to feel powerful.

Let's work together to make sure that students who feel vulnerable know we're there for them.

Let's work together to empower the bystanders to bullying—to support the kids who want to do the right thing and feel guilty as they stand by. Let's work together to ensure that as adults we aren't bystanders.

What the CBE does about bullying

There are many things we do at the CBE to deal with this issue. The first thing we do is recognize that bullying isn't one thing—it's a series of issues and interactions and communication breakdowns that lead to hurt and damage.

Some of the things we do systemwide include having policies that provide for safe and caring schools, policies on Internet use and cyber-bullying, and an emphasis on developing and measuring progress on students' character, citizenship and personal development.

We have a restorative response team which works to re-integrate students who have been suspended and also works in schools with students to help unravel and discuss the often complex interactions that lead to incidents.

We have a diversity team that provides guidance on complex issues of race and culture, and issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity. We are working to establish guidelines because we recognize that these are issues that we need to pay attention to and relate directly to the safety and well-being of students.

Ways to prevent bullying

If you're a student:

- **Be part of the solution.** If you're watching a bullying incident, you're part of the problem. You're the audience the bully wants, and you—more than anyone else—have the power to help.
- **Tell someone you trust if you're being bullied.** And don't stop telling until you get help. Adults *can* help, and you will find one that will listen and act.
- **Get involved in your school's bullying-prevention initiative.** Take part in working groups and school committees; speak about bullying prevention at assemblies; join in events like workshops and role-playing that teach bullying-prevention skills; and be a leader for younger kids.

learning | as unique | as every student


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At the school level, there are a variety of programs that provide support. There are peer support programs, clubs and counselling. Just as we personalize learning, we work to personalize our approaches to bullying at schools because each incident is different.

At the CBE, we know we don't have all the answers or solutions and so we reach out to our strong partnerships with the community, including the Calgary Police Service, the United Way, mental health agencies, Alberta Education and many youth organizations like the Boys and Girls Clubs, and most importantly parents.

We reach out because this is a community issue. We can't monitor what happens to our students on the weekend and at home, but we know that such things as cyber-bullying can have a profound impact on our learning environments.

So we reach out to parents and guardians and ask them to see and understand what their children are doing online and otherwise. There was a time when we heard the bullying statements—now we need to pay attention to the silence of the Internet and its power to hurt.

And we ask parents and guardians to work with us by letting your school know if your children don't want to come to school, if you have any concerns about them not feeling safe or secure or happy there. Talk to your principal or your teacher.

If your child is talking about depression or anxiety or showing changed behaviour seek support. Talk to your child. Children surface these issues because they want adults to help. Again, talk to us.

The research is clear: connecting kids to caring adults at home, in school and/or in the community makes a huge difference in building resilient young people. Let's work together to make sure that happens.

What bullying is

According to Alberta Education, bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate, repeated and hostile activity marked by an imbalance of power, intent to harm and/or threat of aggression. It can be verbal, social, physical, or cyber-bullying.

What bullying isn't

Bullying is not a normal part of growing up, and it does not build character. It is a learned behavior that hurts everyone—those who get bullied, those doing the bullying, and the people watching. It damages our schools, our communities and our society at large. Bullying is a relationship problem. It is the assertion of interpersonal power through aggression.

Ways for parents to prevent bullying

If you're a parent

- **Listen to children.** If someone tells you bullying is happening, take action to stop it. If someone is exhibiting bullying behavior, let that person talk about his or her experiences, and offer support in a non-judgmental way.
- **Be a positive role model.** Set a good example, reinforce positive behavior and create constructive leadership situations.
- **Set consequences.** Make bullying unacceptable.
- **Get involved in your school's bullying-prevention initiative.** Share your concerns about bullying and your ideas for preventing bullying with the school participate in planning committees and know the procedure to use when bullying has occurred.

Bullying involves:

- repeated and consistent negative actions against another.
- an imbalance of power between the bully and the target.
- a contrast of feelings between the bully and the target as a result of the bullying episode (the child who bullies may feel excited, powerful or amused, while the target feels afraid, embarrassed or hurt).

Check here for more information:

- [Safe and Secure School Environments](#)
- [Student Discipline](#)
- [Internet Safety](#)
- [Restorative Response Intervention](#)
- [Bullying Information](#)
- [Bully Free Alberta](#)
- [Alberta Education – Bullying Prevention](#)

