

STOP BULLYING!

take action. speak up.

www1.pgcps.org/antibullying/

FAQS FOR PARENTS

What is bullying?

Bullying is unwanted behavior that is repeated over time with the intent to cause harm. It is characterized by an imbalance of power, either real or perceived. Bullying can include repeated threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically, verbally or emotionally such as excluding someone from a group on purpose and inappropriate use of social media.

The student who is bullied has difficulty defending him or herself. Bullying is peer abuse. There is a difference between a conflict and bullying. In a conflict there is no imbalance of power; people have difference positions, but a common interest.

Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power – such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity – to control or harm others.

Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

What if I think my child is being bullied?

- Stay calm, listen, and let your child know you will work together to stop the bullying – do not ignore it.
- Do not try to contact parents of the children involved – let school staff assist.
- Set up a meeting with your child's teacher or counselor.
- Complete a school *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form*.
- Find out what school resources are available to help.
- Work with school staff to develop a plan of support for your child – include plans for keeping your child safe at school, especially during class breaks, lunch and recess.

When should I contact school security or the police?

- If your child is threatened with a weapon.
- If bullying includes criminal acts such as assault, extortion, theft, serious threats or vandalism.

What should my child do?

- Speak out and report bullying immediately to school staff or a trusted adult.
- Ask to complete a *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form*.
- Stay calm and don't get involved in a fight – your child could get hurt, suspended or expelled from school.
- Participate in a meeting with parents and school staff to develop a plan of support.

What can I do if my child is bullying others?

- Speak up and tell your child that what he or she is doing is considered bullying.
- Encourage them to respect other children's rights to be themselves, to choose their friends and to feel safe at school.
- Talk to them about the consequences of being a bully: it hurts their relationships with others, and could get them suspended or expelled from school.
- Set up a meeting with your child's teacher or counselor to develop a plan of support.
- Find out what school resources are available to help.
- Monitor your child's behavior.
- Seek professional help to address any possible mental health concerns.