

# DOVE Committee Invites You To TAKE A STAND AGAINST BULLYING

## WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying can be defined as repeated and systematic harassment and attacks on others. Bullying can be perpetrated by individuals or groups. Bullying takes many forms, and can include many different behaviours, such as:

- physical violence and attacks
- verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs
- threats and intimidation
- extortion or stealing of money and possessions
- exclusion from the peer group

Racially or **ethnically-based** verbal abuse and **gender-based** put-downs are also found in the bullying situation.

## What Can Parents Do if Their Children are Being Bullied?

1. Ask the child directly. Often children do not wish to tell their parents due to shame and embarrassment, or fear that bullies will retaliate if they tell. Look for signs such as: fear of going to school, lack of friends, missing belongings and torn clothing, and increased fearfulness and anxiety.
2. Work with the school immediately to make sure your child is safe, that effective consequences are applied toward the bully, and that monitoring at school is adequate. Advocate for involvement of the bully's parents. If the bullying is happening on the way to and from school, arrange for the child to get to school with older, supportive children, or take him or her until other interventions can take place.
3. If your child is timid, and lacks friends, try to arrange for your child participate in positive social groups which meet his or her interests. Developing your child's special skills and confidence in the context of a positive social group can be very helpful.
4. Suggest that the school implement a comprehensive anti-bullying program. A home-and school association meeting to discuss and support such an initiative can be helpful.

## What to do if Your Child is Aggressive or Bullies Others?

Take the problem seriously. Children and youth who bully others often get into serious trouble in later life, and may receive criminal convictions. They may have continuing trouble in their relationships with others.

Here are some things you can do to turn the situation around.

1. Talk to your child, talk to his or her teachers and administrators. Keep in mind that a bully will try to deny or minimize his or her wrong-doing.
2. *Make it clear to your child that you will not tolerate this kind of behaviour, and discuss with your child the negative impact bullying has on the victims. Do not accept explanations that "it was all in fun."*
3. Arrange for an effective, non-violent consequence, which is in proportion with the severity of your child's actions, and his or her age and stage of development. Corporal punishment carries the message that "might is right."
4. *Increase your supervision of your child's activities and whereabouts, and who they are associating with. Spend time with your child, and set reasonable rules for their activities and curfews.*
5. Co-operate with the school in modifying your child's aggressive behaviour. Frequent communication with teachers and/or administrators is important to find out how your child is doing in changing his or her behaviour.
6. *Praise the efforts your child makes toward non-violent and responsible behaviour, as well as for following home and school rules. Keep praising any efforts the child makes.*
7. If your child is viewing violent television shows, including cartoons, and is playing violent video games, this will increase violent and aggressive behaviour. Change family and child's viewing and play patterns to non-violent ones.
8. *Make sure that your child is not seeing violence between members of his or her family. Modelling of aggressive behaviour at home can lead to violence by the child against others at school and in later life.*
9. Seek help from a school psychologist, social worker, or children's mental health centre in the community if you would like support in working with your child.

**D.O.V.E. Committee**

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<http://www.deltassist.com/dove.html>