

Bullying and Cyberbullying Information, Statistics and Resources

Bullying and the Law

Q: What is bullying under the law?

A: There is no uniform definition of bullying under the law. This is partly because there is no federal law that prohibits school bullying. In addition, state anti-bullying laws all define “bullying” somewhat differently.

To take legal action for school bullying, several factors are typically involved:

- Physical abuse that hurts a child’s body or possessions
- Verbal abuse, which involves saying or writing mean things, including name-calling, threats and offensive graffiti
- Social abuse, which involves hurting a child’s reputation or relationships, such as spreading rumors or excluding someone on purpose
- The abuse is repeated over time
- The abuse involves a real or perceived power imbalance—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm a child
- The abuse causes serious harm to a child—physically, emotionally and/or psychologically

Bullying is not the occasional hurtful taunt, teenage “drama,” or bickering among peers with equal power.

Bullying lawsuits based solely on verbal or social abuse generally fail. Most successful suits involve abuse with a physical component that has been happening for at least a couple of months and has serious negative effects on the child—such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, excessive absenteeism, deterioration in general physical health, lower grades, and/or withdrawal from the school.

Q: Is school bullying against the law?

A: Every state has anti-bullying laws that require schools to take action to address and prevent bullying. There are also other state laws that may apply when a school fails to protect a child from bullying. There is no federal law against school bullying, but some types of bullying take the form of discriminatory harassment, and there are federal laws that prohibit that kind of conduct. For example, schools have responsibilities under federal civil rights laws to protect children who are bullied because of their race, color, ancestry, ethnic background, sex or disability. (The Bully Project)

National Bullying Statistics

In America, before they graduate high school, 1 out of every 4 kids will think about suicide AND have a plan on how they will take their own life.

- Kirk Smalley, 2012 (Co-Founder Stand for the Silent)

In the USA, over 55,000 kids have committed suicide due to bullying in the last seven years.

- Kirk Smalley, 2015 (Co-Founder Stand for the Silent)

- About 30% of students are bullied and 160,000 of kids choose to stay at home because of their fear of being bullied. (ABC News)

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people. Over 14% of high school students have considered suicide. 7% have attempted it. Bullying victims are 2-9 times more likely to consider suicide than non-victims. 30% of students are either bullies or victims of bullying. That’s almost 1 in every 3 students who are affected by bullying. (CDC)

- 56% of students have witnessed bullying and this usually takes place at school. About 15% of students have not been showing up in school because of their fear. Overall, 71% reported that bullying remains to be an on-going problem and one out of ten students decide to drop out from school due to repeated bullying.

- More than half of bullying situations (57 percent) stop when a peer intervenes on behalf of the student being bullied

- School-based bullying prevention programs decrease bullying by up to 25%

- The reasons for being bullied reported most often by students were looks (55%), body shape (37%), and race (16%)

- 15% of high school students (grades 9–12) were electronically bullied in the past year; however, 55.2% of LGBT students experienced cyberbullying.

- According to one large study, the following percentages of middle schools students had experienced these various types of bullying: name calling (44.2 %); teasing (43.3 %); spreading rumors or lies (36.3%); pushing or shoving (32.4%); hitting, slapping, or kicking (29.2%); leaving out (28.5%); threatening (27.4%); stealing belongings (27.3%); sexual comments or gestures (23.7%); e-mail or blogging (9.9%).
- Most bullying takes place in school, outside on school grounds, and on the school bus. Bullying also happens wherever kids gather in the community. And of course, cyberbullying occurs on cell phones and online.
- According to one large study, the following percentages of middle schools students had experienced bullying in these various places at school: classroom (29.3%); hallway or lockers (29.0%); cafeteria (23.4%); gym or PE class (19.5%); bathroom (12.2%); playground or recess (6.2%).
- Only about 20 to 30% of students who are bullied notify adults about the bullying.

Cyberbullying Statistics

Cyberbullying affects many adolescents and teens on a daily basis. Cyberbullying involves using technology, like cell phones and the Internet, to bully or harass another person. **Cyberbullying can take many forms:**

- Sending mean messages or threats to a person's email account or cell phone
- Spreading rumors online or through texts
- Posting hurtful or threatening messages on social networking sites or web pages
- Stealing a person's account information to break into their account and send damaging messages
- Pretending to be someone else online to hurt another person
- Taking unflattering pictures of a person and spreading them through cell phones or the Internet
- Sexting, or circulating sexually suggestive pictures or messages about a person

- About 80 percent of all high school students have encountered being bullied in some fashion online.
- Boys are more likely to be threatened by cyberbullies than girls.
- Cyberbullying victims are more likely to have low self-esteem and to consider suicide.

Visit these websites for more valuable resources and information on bullying:

Stand for the Silent

<http://www.standforthesilent.org>

The Bully Project

<http://www.thebullyproject.com>

StopBullying.Gov

<http://www.stopbullying.gov>

Yuba City Unified School District

<http://www.ycusd.k12.ca.us>

Sutter County Superintendent of Schools

<http://www.sutter.k12.ca.us>

Cyberbullying Research Center

<http://cyberbullying.org> **and** <http://cyberbullying.org/report>

Marysville Unified School District

<http://www.mjusd.k12.ca.us>

Yuba County Office of Education

<http://www.yubacoe.org>

Pacer

<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources>

Connect Safely

<http://www.connectsafely.org>

California Courts

<http://www.courts.ca.gov>

California Department of Education

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyingprev.asp>

Bully Police USA

<http://www.bullypolice.org>

WikiHow

<http://m.wikihow.com/Stop-Cyber-Bullying>

Mayor Law, LLC

<http://www.mayorlaw.com/cyberbullying>

The movement against bullying

<http://nobullying.com>

Facebook Bullying Prevention Hub

<https://www.facebook.com/safety/bullying>

#iCANHELP

<http://www.icanhelpdeletenegativity.org>

ReThink

<http://www.rethinkwords.com>

Not in our Town

<https://www.niot.org>

The Tyler Clementi Foundation

<http://www.tylerclementi.org>

The Kind Campaign

<https://www.kindcampaign.com>

His Name was Steven

<http://www.hisnamewassteven.org>

End To Cyberbullying Organization (ETCB)

<http://www.endcyberbullying.org>

Transforming Conflict

<http://www.transformingconflict.org>

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

<http://www.casel.org>

NOLO Cyberbullying Laws California

<http://www.criminaldefenselawyer.com/resources/cyberbullying-laws-california.htm>

Federal Bureau of Investigation

<https://www.fbi.gov>

California School Boards Association – Cyberbullying Fact Sheet

https://www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources/DistrictPolicyServices/~media/CSBA/Files/GovernanceResources/GovernanceBriefs/201404_CyberbullyingFactSheet.ashx