

NOT IN MY SCHOOL!



Learn how you can help stop bullying at school and in your community.

Manitoba 

371.58 Not in my school

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Do you remember your school days fondly?

The favourite teacher who made a difference
in your life? The friends you played with?

The clubs you joined?

For many of us, recollections of our school
days are good ones. Classes were fun and
the future was wide open.

Unfortunately, not everyone's experiences in life are so positive. For those affected by bullying, going to and from public places, home and school can be filled with fear and concern for personal safety.

Communities and schools in Manitoba are taking action to stop bullying and you can too. The information in this brochure will help you identify the signs of bullying and what to do to help.

What is bullying?

Bullying is a learned behaviour. It occurs when a person purposely and repeatedly picks on someone else to cause physical harm, humiliation or fear.

Most people who bully others have been bullied themselves.

Bullying can turn something as simple as the daily walk to school or recess into an event so stressful that it causes worry and even physical illness.

Types of bullying

The most common types of bullying are:

- **Verbal** - putdowns and malicious gossip
- **Physical** - harming someone or their personal property
- **Emotional** - social shunning and sabotage
- **Electronic** - hurtful Internet images, chatroom gossip, text messaging, harassing telephone calls

Repeated racial putdowns and unwanted sexual comments or leering are also part of bullying behaviour.

Who are the bullies?

All people can be bullies. Bullying behaviour can be found in all types of families, communities and almost all age groups. Young and old, boys and girls, men and women, from all walks of life can be involved in forms of bullying.



How bullying works

There are often three parties involved in bullying - the person doing the bullying, the person targeted by the bully and those who watch or witness bullying.

Often peers and other witnesses don't realize they give power and attention to bullying by staying to watch. They often feel helpless and don't report bullying. They worry that they might be the next target. This lets the bullying continue. Schools must ensure that anyone who reports bullying remains unharmed.



Research shows that, most of the time bullying stops in less than 10 seconds when peers intervene on behalf of the person being bullied.

It's important to never put anyone in danger and to remind your child:

- Don't get physical. Speaking up is often enough to stop the bullying.
- Tell a trusted adult. Talk about it at home.
- Don't stay and watch.
- Encourage others to report bullying when they see it.

There is a difference between telling to get someone INTO trouble, and telling to get someone OUT of trouble. Telling about bullying gets people OUT of trouble. It's the responsible thing to do.

Both boys and girls bully others

Many boys bully to meet needs for power and control. Most girls tend to bully to meet needs involving relationships and social connections.

Because of this difference, girls often use emotional tactics to bully others. They might spread nasty rumours, exclude someone from social activities, make racial or sexual slurs, send threatening or harassing text messages or make intimidating telephone calls. Physical bullying could include fighting, soaking or ripping someone's clothing or pushing someone into an object or someone else.

Boys tend to be more direct with bullying behaviour. Fighting, pushing, taunting, insulting, sexual putdowns, racial slurs, hurtful Internet blogging or demeaning chatroom comments are more obvious forms of bullying.



Signs that your child may be being bullied

Bruises and scrapes are easy to see. But there are other signs that your child may be being bullied. These may include:

- Change in usual behaviour, especially in social situations
- Symptoms of depression, anxiety, loneliness
- Low self-esteem
- Fear of specific locations such as a neighbourhood store, playground, or school
- Crying before and after school or a group sport/recreational event
- Feeling sick without being ill
- Thinking about suicide, running away or quitting school or a team
- Lack of interest in social events that used to be of interest
- Unexplained broken personal possessions, loss of money or loss of personal items
- Sudden disinterest in the Internet

Signs that your child may be bullying others

It's hard to admit, but sometimes our children bully others.

Some signs may include:

- Change in usual behaviour, especially in social situations
- No lasting friendships; friends keep changing
- Symptoms of anger, depression, anxiety, loneliness
- Sense of entitlement; finds forgiveness difficult
- Inappropriate, hurtful sense of humour
- Hangs out at specific locations such as a neighbourhood store, playground or school for no reason
- Secretive; judgmental of others; blames others
- Thinks about suicide, running away or quitting school
- Lack of interest in social events that used to be of interest
- Unexplained personal possessions, money, food
- Sudden, secretive interest in the Internet, text messages and telephone
- Communication from the school indicating negative behaviour is affecting school work

What Parents can do

Children and Youth Learn by Watching Adults

- Show ways to get along with people, manage angry feelings, accept differences and cope with peer pressure.
- Show how you resolve differences in a calm and positive way. Explain how you feel and how to stay calm.
- Monitor television watching and Internet use. Discourage anti-social and aggressive shows and websites.
- Remove your child from situations that have the potential for violence, threats or intimidation.
- Explain your actions.
- We all need help and advice from time to time. Ask for help when you need it. Show your child that you care.



Reinforce with your child that you are there to listen and to help.

Children and Youth Learn by Doing

- Help your child think of, and practice, appropriate responses when being teased or intimidated. If your child teases or intimidates others, help your child think of, and practice, appropriate ways to be sociable and to ask to join in a group activity.
- Teach your child how to politely disagree, how to detect manipulation and how to respect someone's personal space.
- Talk through difficult situations, considering pros and cons. Practice problem-solving skills at home.
- Support and give positive feedback when your child uses positive social actions and makes safe decisions.
- Learn more about bullying and share information with your child.
- When your child invites others to play, supervise their activities in a friendly way. Step in only when the children have tried to get along without success or there is a risk for harm.
- Encourage and expand your child's interests and abilities. A leading cause of bullying is boredom.

Take time to listen

The most important thing you can do is listen to your child and provide comfort and support. Let your child know that you will help them through difficult times. Whether your child has been bullied, has bullied others or has witnessed bullying, feelings of being misunderstood, alone and helpless are common. Your understanding and attention lets them know that they aren't alone, that you care and that help is available.



What schools are doing

Children and Youth Learn by Watching Others

- *A Whole School Approach to Safety and Belonging* has been distributed to all Manitoba schools. It includes seven steps to safety and a guaranteed response to violence and bullying.
- Many schools provide student-based services such as Conflict Managers and Peer Helpers to support positive behaviour.

Children and Youth Learn by Doing

- Classroom activities that educate students on personal and Internet safety, bullying prevention, positive social behaviour, conflict resolution and positive decision-making are part of regular mandatory curriculum
- Teachers and school counsellors support children and youth in learning and practicing appropriate social skills. Individuals who have been bullied, who have bullied others, and who have been affected by witnessing bullying are provided with professional assistance.
- Children and youth are taught a variety of ways to politely disagree, detect manipulation and respect themselves, personal space and property.
- Children are provided a safe environment with many programs, materials, resources and opportunities to discuss and consider alternatives to violence or bullying.



What Manitoba is doing

The Safe Schools Charter

In 2004, the Manitoba government made it law that schools must ensure safe and caring environments for all students. The Safe Schools Charter requires all Manitoba schools to keep their safety policies appropriate and current with the assistance of a Safe Schools Advisory Committee.

In addition, every school in Manitoba must have a Code of Conduct that protects students by addressing:

- Bullying
- Abuse
- Discrimination
- Gang activity
- Possession of weapons
- Internet use
- Use and possession of alcohol and drugs
- Disciplinary consequences
- Appeal mechanisms for disciplinary consequences



Partnerships

The Manitoba government, together with partner organizations, provides support and resources to address issues related to bullying. Some examples are:

- A Whole School Approach to Safety and Belonging: Preventing Violence and Bullying (support document and workshops)
- Safe Schools Regional Conferences and Youth Forums
- Student Services Conferences
- Safe and Caring Schools website www.edu.gov.mb.ca
- Safe Schools Manitoba



Working together

It takes teamwork to stop bullying. That's why the Manitoba government is working with students, parents, teachers, schools, school divisions and partnering with various community organizations to develop and implement bullying prevention initiatives.

- **Safe Schools Manitoba** - Safe Schools Manitoba is a partnership of organizations committed to enhancing the safety of Manitoba's schools and communities. Its aim is to create a greater awareness and understanding of the problems that impact school safety. The program advocates a positive, proactive approach to the promotion of safe and caring schools and communities. Safe Schools Manitoba is funded by Manitoba Justice and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and youth.
- **Support for schools and teachers** - Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth provides schools with curriculum support information that outlines the most effective strategies for dealing with bullies in schools and classrooms.
- **Support for parents** - The Manitoba government recently produced a publication called "Working Together - Safe, Caring Schools, Families and Communities". This bilingual document provides parents with information concerning bullying as well as a list of resources they can contact to receive more information about how they can keep their children safe both at school and in the community.

To learn more about preventing bullying and keeping your child safe, please visit *Safe and Caring Schools* at:

www.edu.gov.mb.ca

