Bullying Information and Prevention

Information for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

What is Bullying?

- A bully is a person who purposely tries to hurt others by:
  - Being mean
  - Hitting
  - Name-calling
  - Telling lies
  - Texting/sending mean, hateful messages
  - Spreading rumors

Definition of Bullying

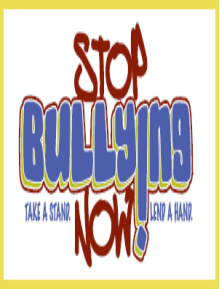
These three conditions create a bullying situation:

1. Negative or malicious behavior
2. Behavior repeated over a period of time
3. A relationship in which there is an imbalance in strength or power

Signs/Symptoms of Bullying

- Frightened to walk to school
- Schoolwork is going downhill
- Has damaged clothing, school supplies, textbooks, etc.
- Becomes withdrawn
- Starts fights with peers or friends
- Has headaches, stomachaches, or other stress symptoms
- Cries in bed at night
- Has nightmares
- Possessions or money is missing
- Unexplained bruises, cuts, etc.
- Anxious when their cell phone rings or they get a new email

How Can I Help if my child is being bullied?



- **Affirm your Child** - "You were right to tell me about this." "I'm glad you asked me to help you with this."
- **Ask Questions** - "Tell me more about what happened." "Has this happened before?" "Did anyone try to help you?"
- **Assess the Student's Safety** - Determine what the child needs in order to feel and be safe now.
- **Take Action** – Talk to school personnel; file a report in person or on-line

How Do I Report Bullying ?

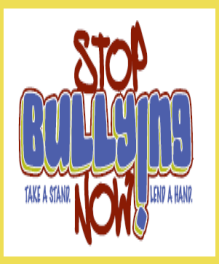
- There are several methods for reporting suspected bullying incidents:
  - Contact a school by phone and report it to school personnel
  - You can make a report in person and complete the **Bullying and/or Harassment Form.**
  - You can report on-line at:

http://www.polk-fl.net/parents/generalinformation/bullying.htm

Reporting

- Anyone can report
- It can be reported anonymously
- Students/parents/staff can report via the website
- Students can tell a staff member

What Happens After It Is Reported?



- Administrators will acknowledge receipt of your report in three school days
- A preliminary review of the incident may be conducted to determine need for the investigation
- If warranted, an investigation will be conducted and completed within 10 days
- Parents of the victim and bully will be notified of the results and the school will take appropriate action

What will the school do?

- Increase supervision
- Restructure or change schedules
- Pair the Targeted student with other children who will not support bullying
- Counseling, to learn effective coping skills
- Additional education for targeted groups of students

What Can I Do To Prevent?

- Talk to your child – ask questions
- Know where they are going
- Know what they are doing
- Set limits/boundaries
- Monitor your child's behavior

What about Cyberbullying?

- Cyberbullying is no different than bullying except that a device such as a cell phone or computer is used
- It is just as important that you look at their device
- Check emails and texts
- Check sites that may have been visited
- Talk about what is on their phone/computer

Resources

- Stop Bullying Now website – US Department of Health and Human Resources

http://www.stopbullying.gov/

- Polk County Schools bullying website

http://www.polk-fl.net/parents/generalinformation/bullying.htm