

# Be Kind, Show Aloha

What Parents and Guardians Need to Know About Bullying

**Together, we can ensure every student feels supported and safe.**

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) is committed to providing all students with a safe and inclusive learning environment. Families play an important role, and the Department appreciates your partnership in promoting aloha throughout our school community.

## What is bullying?

Bullying is any written, verbal, graphic, or physical act that:

- hurts, harms, humiliates, or intimidates a student (including protected class students), and
- is sufficiently **severe, persistent, or pervasive** that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

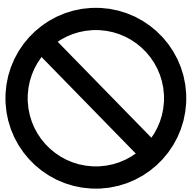
## What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that happens through electronically transmitted acts, including but not limited to those transmitted through the internet, cell phone, or wireless handheld device that:

- hurts, harms, humiliates, or intimidates a student (including protected class students), and
- is sufficiently **severe, persistent, or pervasive** that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

Source: HAR Chapter 19, §8-19-2 Definitions. p. 19-5, 19-6.

**The Department encourages students to use these steps to respond to bullying.**



Tell the individual  
to **STOP**



**WALK** away  
from the situation



**TALK** to a  
trusted adult  
and/or report using the  
Speak Now anonymous app  
(<https://bit.ly/HIDOE-Speak-Now>)



# What should I know and look out for?

**If you observe any of these signs, ask your child what has been going on and listen calmly.**

## Warning Signs Your Child May Be Experiencing Bullying

- Unexplained injuries, lost or destroyed belongings.
- Frequent headaches or stomachaches, feeling sick, or faking illness.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares.
- Declining grades or not wanting to go to school.
- Distancing from friends and family.
- Hiding their screen from others out of embarrassment.
- Losing interest in activities.

Sources: StopBullying.gov. Warning Signs for Bullying (2021); Cyberbullying Research Center. Parent Resources (n.d).

## Warning Signs Your Child May Be Bullying Others

- Gets into physical or verbal fights or has friends who bully others.
- Sent to the administrator's office frequently.
- Has unexplained extra money or new belongings.
- Blames others and does not accept responsibility for their actions.
- Is competitive and worries about their reputation or popularity.

**When you see any of these signs, talk with your child to find out what support they need.**

Source: StopBullying.gov. Warning Signs for Bullying (2021).

# How do I teach my child to recognize, prevent, and respond to bullying?

## For Children in Grades PreK-5 Developmental Need: Emotional Safety

| Skills Parents Can Teach                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Online Tips for Your Child                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | What Parents Can Do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Be Kind:</b> Practice kindness and respect toward others.</li><li>• <b>Be Aware:</b> Help your child notice when something feels unsafe or uncomfortable.</li><li>• <b>Spot Unkind Behavior:</b> Help them recognize mean behavior or teasing.</li><li>• <b>Find Help:</b> Go to a trusted adult at school when help is needed.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Ask First:</b> Remind your child to ask a parent or guardian before posting or sharing anything online.</li><li>• <b>Know How to Report:</b> Teach how to block/report people who are unkind.</li><li>• <b>Set Early Tech Rules:</b> Set clear rules and encourage them to share concerns about what they see online.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Be Curious:</b> Ask about your child's interests and supervise online activities.</li><li>• <b>Be a Role Model:</b> Set and follow clear rules for technology use and limit screen time.</li><li>• <b>Adjust Settings:</b> Choose age-appropriate content and turn off autoplay if possible.</li><li>• <b>Stay Engaged:</b> Keep up with school policies and classroom expectations.</li></ul> |

Model kindness and talk about bullying early so they know they can come to you for help.

## For Children in Grades 6-8

### Developmental Need: Friendships and Belonging

| Skills Parents Can Teach                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Online Tips for Your Child                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | What Parents Can Do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Show Empathy:</b> Pause and consider how others might feel before acting.</li> <li>• <b>Set Boundaries:</b> Be a good friend while also setting healthy boundaries.</li> <li>• <b>Exit Safely:</b> Walk away from unsafe situations and seek adult support.</li> <li>• <b>Build Healthy Activities:</b> Balance screen time with sleep, outdoor play, and offline friendships.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Digital Footprint Awareness:</b> Remind your child that once something is posted, it is permanent.</li> <li>• <b>Manage Privacy:</b> Teach your child to use strong passwords and keep profiles private.</li> <li>• <b>Think Before Sharing:</b> Remind them that forwarding, recording, or liking harmful posts is a form of bullying.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support Smart Choices:</b> Encourage your child to trust their instincts and remind them that you are there to support them.</li> <li>• <b>Review Apps Together:</b> Decide which social apps are appropriate with your child.</li> <li>• <b>Stay Involved:</b> Participate in school events and stay connected with teachers and staff.</li> </ul> |
| Teach safe, supportive relationships and how to navigate social pressures (like social media).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## For Children in Grades 9-12

### Developmental Need: Lifelong Skill-Building

| Skills Parents Can Teach                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Online Tips for Your Child                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | What Parents Can Do                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Engage:</b> Find positive ways to contribute to their school and community.</li> <li>• <b>Advocate:</b> Speak up for themselves and others in a safe, respectful way.</li> <li>• <b>Know When to Engage:</b> Recognize when it is safe to address a situation and when it is better to step away.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Evaluate Before You Share:</b> Verify sources, check dates, and question content before reposting.</li> <li>• <b>Take Responsibility:</b> Understand that posts, comments, and likes can influence others. Avoid spreading harm, rumors, or false information.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Normalize Help-Seeking:</b> Remind your teen that everyone needs support sometimes. They do not have to handle tough situations alone.</li> <li>• <b>Discuss Tech Rules Together:</b> Collaborate on guidelines and explain why they matter.</li> <li>• <b>Talk About the Future:</b> Discuss how choices at school, online, or in-person can affect college, work, and long-term reputations.</li> </ul> |
| Empower them to make responsible decisions and seek help in unsafe or overwhelming situations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

Source(s): U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Bullying (2024); U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity. Bullying Awareness and Prevention: For Parents (n.d.); Center for Safe Schools. What Every Parent Should Know About Bullying (2024); Cyberbullying Research Center. Parent Resources (n.d.).

# What should I do if my child has been bullied?

**Make sure your child is okay.** Talk with your child and help them feel safe. If there is immediate danger, call 911.

**Gather as much information as possible.** Document any screenshots, videos, or witnesses (who/what/when/where).

**Report the incident.** You may report an incident in any of the following ways:

- Call or email the principal or designee directly.
- File a Chapter 19 complaint using the form (<https://bit.ly/HIDOE-Ch19Form>).
- Use the **Speak Now anonymous reporting app** (<https://bit.ly/HIDOE-Speak-Now>).

Share the facts, your child's name, grade, and ask who will follow up. Report criminal behavior to your local county police department.

**Partner with the school.** Stay in communication with the school and work together to identify what your child needs to be safe.

**Follow up and support your child.** Remind your child to use the Stop, Walk, Talk strategies.

## Resources and Information

### Anti-Bullying Website

Hawaii Administrative Rules Chapter 19, Speak Now app, policies and procedures to report bullying

<https://bit.ly/HIDOE-AntiBullying>



### Civil Rights and Compliance Branch

Federal and state laws, and Department resources for Civil Rights administrative rules and policies

<https://bit.ly/HIDOE-CRCB>



### Here to Help Website

Free and supportive resources for families such as parent coaching and one-on-one support

<https://heretohelphidoe.com>



### Online Resources

National and statewide informational resources to support families

<https://bit.ly/HIDOE-BP-ParentResources>



*988 offers 24/7 support for mental health, substance use, and more. Text, call, or chat 988.*

*If your child is in immediate danger, call 911.*

**Mahalo for helping us keep our schools and communities safe so all students can thrive in a positive learning environment.**