

Information for Parents/Guardians about Ontario's Survey on Bullying

Bullying is a serious issue that can affect students' learning, sense of safety and overall well-being. Bullying is never okay.

As part of Ontario's work to prevent bullying and keep students safe in our schools, the province has launched an online survey to learn about students' experience with bullying in schools, including their experience with reporting and responding to bullying and bullying prevention activities.

We encourage students, parents and educators to [complete the survey](http://www.ontario.ca/page/consultation-bullying-ontario-schools) at www.ontario.ca/page/consultation-bullying-ontario-schools.

Who can participate?

The online survey is open to all students and asks them about bullying in their school. Students under the age of 16 who wish to participate in the survey will be asked to seek permission from a parent or guardian.

If students find a topic in the survey that makes them uncomfortable or upset, they are encouraged to talk to a parent/guardian, teacher, principal or another trusted adult about what they are feeling.

Parents/guardians who want to provide input are welcome to complete the survey as well.

What is bullying?

Bullying can take many forms. It can be:

- **physical**, for example hitting, shoving, damaging or stealing property
- **verbal**, for example name calling, mocking, making sexist, racist or homophobic comments
- **social**, for example spreading gossip and/or rumours, excluding others from a group
- **written**, for example writing notes and signs that are hurtful or insulting
- **electronic or cyber bullying**, for example spreading rumours or hurtful comments using email, text messages and on social media.

Bullying can result in someone being hurt or harmed, either by words or actions, by one person or a group of people. It is meant to cause harm, fear or distress, or create a negative environment for another person, for example at school. Bullying occurs in a situation where there is a real or perceived power imbalance. It can happen anywhere, including in your neighbourhood, at school and while on-line. Bullying includes cyberbullying.

Children and youth can be affected by bullying if they are being bullied, they have watched someone else be bullied, or they are bullying others.

Learning from our children and youth

The survey can be completed independently; however, students are invited to discuss the survey with a parent/guardian or other trusted adult. Participation in the survey could provide an opportunity for parents/guardians and their children to talk about bullying.

How to talk about it

When it comes to supporting a child's success, conversations with a parent/guardian, or another caring adult are key.

Parents/guardians can find tips and suggestions to help support and encourage these conversations with the *Parent Tool Kit: Teen Edition* www.ontariodirectors.ca/pe_3_Parent_TE.html

The tool kit provides tips for parents/guardians on various topics:

- **Be a Listener** has tips on how to listen and talk to your teen without a lot of stress
- **Be Informed** has information on understanding what is happening at school
- **Be a Mentor** has advice for parents/guardians who feel anxious about the idea of giving their teen more independence
- **Be a Coach** offers good strategies to help with issues such as lack of rest, stress or bullying

Information to help you

Bullying – we can all help stop it – A ministry resource for parents/guardians and all caring adults with information on what to watch for, what you can do, what you can expect from the school, and where you can go to learn more.

www.ontario.ca/page/bullying-we-can-all-help-stop-it

Building Healthy Relationships – Tool kit focuses on topics such as mental well-being, conflict resolution, bullying prevention, social media and resilience.

www.ontariodirectors.ca/pe_1_Relationships.html

We All Belong – A resource that includes videos, discussion guides and a book for parents/guardians and schools to encourage parent/guardian engagement and to promote a whole-school approach to safe, inclusive and accepting schools. The practical topics include bullying prevention, nurturing kindness and empathy, and problem-solving together.

www.copahabitat.ca/en/bullying/bullying-capsules

Kids Help Phone – Support service that offers counselling 24/7 in English and French. Children and youth can talk or text with someone about what they are feeling at 1-800-668-6868 or www.kidshelpphone.ca