



HUGHES SPRINGS ISD BULLYING EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

Information for Students and Families

Hughes Springs ISD Bullying Prevention and Policies

To ensure that instruction is appropriately implemented into HSISD, elementary and junior high students will be taught to recognize bullying, cyberbullying, behaviors, and how to report them. This will be done by the counselors on each campus using Character Strong curriculum and age-appropriate classroom culture-building discussions that encourage peers to intervene when they observe bullying occur; and will use explicit direct instruction that characterizes bullying as a behavior that results from the student's need to acquire more mature social or coping skills, not an immutable trait.

At the junior high and high school level, neuroplasticity of the brain will be addressed in health class, using explicit direct instruction, so the student recognizes bullying, including cyberbullying, as a behavior that can come from a developmental need to acquire more social skills, can change when the brain matures and learns better ways of coping, and is not an immutable trait. Explicit direct instruction incorporating classroom-culture or school-culture-building discussions which portray bullying as an undesirable behavior and means for attaining or maintaining social status in school and to dissuade students from using bullying as a tool for reputation management will be used along with discussion with students to recognize the role reporting plays in promoting a safe school community.

Information will be presented to campus site base committees by the campus principal to provide parents and community members information and HSISD's plan to address bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives.

HSISD has an online anonymous reporting system for bullying. In addition to this, students are encouraged to report incidents of bullying to a trusted teacher, counselor, or administrator.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is often repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time, but a one-time event can be bullying if it's severe. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

What Can I Do If My Child is Being Bullied?

- Thank your child for reporting and find out more about the bullying. Do not ignore the bullying or tell your child to ignore it.
- Listen carefully to what your child tells you about the bullying. Find out the specifics.
- Don't blame your child for the bullying. Let him or her know you're sorry this has happened.
- If you disagree with how your child handled the bullying, avoid criticizing him or her. It's not easy to figure out what to do . . . even for adults. Instead brainstorm what he or she might do differently next time.
- Contact the teacher, counselor, or assistant principal (AP) immediately to share your concerns. Work closely with school personnel to solve the problem. Ask what will happen now that you've made the report. What's the plan?
- Check your own emotions. Step back and think carefully about what you will do next. Avoid underreacting by minimizing it but avoid overreacting by becoming highly emotional. Your child will often mimic your response. Do not encourage any type of retaliation.
- Teach your child assertiveness and resiliency strategies (the counselor can assist with this).

- Find ways to get your child more connected such as sports, clubs, meeting new friends, etc. Connected students are less likely to be targets of bullying.
- Ask your child to report all future bullying or retaliation to you and the AP. Keep reporting until it stops.

Two Ways to Make a Report of Bullying

1. Offline (in person)

- a. Report to a campus administrator, counselor, or assistant principal (in person or in writing).
- b. Report to teacher (in person or in writing) or other staff members in the building.

2. Online

- a. Students: Go to the Hughes Springs ISD Home page. Click the Students Button. Click on the stop sign icon to report bullying, or use the link below.

<https://www.hsisd.net/page/Report%20Bullying>

- b. Parents: Go to the Hughes Springs ISD Home page. Click the Parents & Community Button. Click on the stop sign icon to report bullying, or use the link below.

<https://www.hsisd.net/page/Report%20Bullying>

Once you submit your online report the message will be sent to the campus administrators.

What Can I Do If My Child Is Bullying Others?

- Make it clear to your child that you take bullying seriously and will not tolerate this type of behavior.
- Develop clear rules within your family for your child's behavior. Praise your child for following the rules and use nonphysical and logical consequences when rules are broken.
- Teach and model appropriate ways to deal with feelings.
- Help your child find positive ways to meet the need for attention and power.
- Avoid calling your child a "bully." Instead, refer to "bullying behaviors."
- Work with your child on the concept of empathy (the counselor can help with this).
- Monitor your child's e-communications and avoid excessive use of violent video games.
- Spend as much time as possible with your child and carefully supervise and monitor his or her activities. Find out who your child's friends are, and how and where they spend their free time.
- Build on your child's talents by trying to get him or her involved in positive activities (such as clubs, music lessons, and nonviolent sports). Be sure to watch his or her behavior in these places as well.
- Work with your child's school to address this concern. Remember, children do not learn to solve these types of problems on their own. We must teach them!

Bullying or Conflict?

All bullying is mean, but not all mean behavior is bullying. So, if bullying is not the same as pure peer aggression or conflict, what is it? In conflict, the incident is usually "two sided" – each student is being aggressive toward the other one. In bullying, it tends to be one sided. Bullying tends to be more about arrogance, control, and power. It's the feeling that I'm better than you and I have a right to treat you this way. All bullying is mean, but not all mean behavior is bullying. Don't be alarmed if the incident your

child is involved in is called “conflict” instead of “bullying.” Consequences will be given either way. Just because an aggressive act is not called bullying doesn’t mean the aggressor won’t receive a consequence or that the consequence will be any less than if it had been called bullying. It’s documented in a different way.

Bullying may involve, but is not limited to:

- **Verbal:** Hurtful name-calling, teasing, gossiping, making threats, making rude noises, or spreading hurtful rumors.
- **Nonverbal:** Posturing, making gang signs, leering, staring, stalking, destroying property, using graffiti or graphic images, or exhibiting inappropriate and/or threatening gestures or actions.
- **Physical:** Hitting, punching, pushing, shoving, poking, kicking, tripping, strangling, hair pulling, fighting, beating, biting, spitting, or destroying property.
- **Emotional (Psychological):** Rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, intimidating, humiliating, blackmailing, manipulating friendships, isolating, ostracizing, using peer pressure, or rating or ranking personal characteristics.

Bullying occurs when a student or a group of students engages in written or verbal expression or physical conduct that:

- Will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or of damage to the student’s property;
- Is so sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student; or
- Has the effect of substantially negatively impacting a student’s emotional or mental well-being.

Additional Definitions Concerning Bullying

- **Cyberbullying** is defined as willful harassment and intimidation of a person through the use of digital technologies, including, but not limited to, e-mail, blogs, texting on cell phones, social Web sites (e.g Facebook, Twitter, and the like), chat rooms, “sexting”, instant messaging, or video voyeurism by accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the District network system.
- **Cyberstalking** means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at or about a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.
- **Prohibited Harassment** includes, but is not limited, to oral, written, psychological, physical (both climate and contact), and other demonstrative actions with regard to race, creed, ethnic origin, religious preference, gender, disability, or sexual orientation that is harassing.
- **Accused** is defined as any district student in the school or outside the school at school-sponsored events, on school buses, or at training facilities or training programs sponsored by the district who is reported to have committed an act of bullying, whether formally or informally, verbally, or in writing.
- **Complainant** is defined as any individual who has a complaint or concern.

- **Victim** is defined as any district student who is reported to have been the target of an act of bullying during any educational program or activity.

The Right to File a Complaint

The policy of Hughes Springs ISD is that all students and employees be free from bullying. All charges of bullying are to be taken very seriously by students, faculty, staff, administration, and parents. The District will make every reasonable effort to handle and respond to every charge and complaint filed by students and employees in a fair, thorough, and just manner. Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the due process rights of all targeted students and all alleged offenders.

Use of the report form:

Use this form to report bullying so that school officials may investigate and take appropriate steps to increase your safety. Complete the form, providing as much detailed information as possible so that the complaint may be properly investigated. It is important that you report the facts as accurately and completely as possible and that you cooperate fully with the persons designated to investigate the complaint.

Where to file:

Complaint forms will be available from any counselor or administrator or online. Once completed, the principal or designee will handle all complaints.

Confidentiality:

To conduct this investigation in a confidential manner, the school will disclose the contents of your complaint only to those persons who have a need to know of your complaint. In signing the complaint form, you authorize the school to disclose as needed the information you have provided, and may in the future provide, regarding your complaint. Your complaint form will not be shown to the accused student.

Retaliation prohibited: Retaliation against a person who files a formal complaint is strictly prohibited and is grounds for disciplinary action, including but not limited to alternative disciplinary placement, community service, and the like. [See the Student Code of Conduct].

Resources

StopBullying.gov

[Publications: Bullying Prevention \(pacer.org\)](http://Publications: Bullying Prevention (pacer.org))

[Bullying Prevention 101 Handout - Pacer \(pacerkidsagainstbullying.org\)](http://Bullying Prevention 101 Handout - Pacer (pacerkidsagainstbullying.org))

[Bullying Prevention 101: A quickguide for elementary school students \(pacer.org\)](http://Bullying Prevention 101: A quickguide for elementary school students (pacer.org))

[Bullying Prevention 101: A quickguide for middle and high school students \(pacer.org\)](http://Bullying Prevention 101: A quickguide for middle and high school students (pacer.org))

cyberbullying-tipsheet.PDF