

# Confronting the Bully:

## How to Protect Your child with →



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The overall objective is to model a peaceful society for the children, especially in response to a hostile social environment. So the primary role of the parent in confronting the bully is to model how a heart at peace pursues *justice for all*. Confronting the bully is therefore first about seeking control of self; and then advocate for overcoming the bully influence impacting your child. The bully or bullies involved in the attack of your child or a group have serious issues that need to be addressed. So it therefore is imperative that parents pursue a resolution that balances emotion, reason and faith.

### Tips for parents

**Get educated.** Secure a copy of your child's school parent handbook. Read and understand your rights and responsibilities in the event that you or your child is confronted with a bullying situation.

**Open communication.** When there is open communication, it is possible for you to offer guidance to your child about how to respond to inappropriate communications which can lead to bullying, including: gossip, hate speech and sexting. For more about how to accomplish this go to: [www.bananamoments.com](http://www.bananamoments.com).

### How to advocate for your child's interests

**Shed fear.** Document what is happening. Keep a journal.

**New Tools.** "Seth's Law" is a new law that strengthens existing state anti-bullying laws to help protect all California public school students. Seth's Law requires public schools in California to update their anti-bullying policies and programs, and it focuses on protecting students who are bullied based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity/gender expression, as well as race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, disability, and religion.

**School policy.** Invoke the school's bullying policy. Do not allow school officials to downplay it. School districts are required to post annually

update support resources to youth who have been subjected to school-based discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying and their families on their websites. A list of these resources must also be provided to each school within the district (Education Code Section 234.5)

**Know the law.** There are federal laws that protect your child's civil rights on school campuses. Do not allow others to minimize abuse as acceptable or a phase. Your child needs to understand the importance of standing your ground with confidence in the face of an abuser. <http://www.bravesociety.org/>

**Anti-Bullying Complaint Process.** School districts must adopt a process for receiving and investigating complaints of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The process must include a timeline to investigate and resolve complaints and an appeals process for the complainant. All complaints are to remain confidential, as appropriate, and schools are required to protect complainants from retaliation. (Education Code Section 234.1(b) & (f))

**Publication of Anti-Bullying Policy and Complaint Process.** School districts must publicize their anti-bullying policy and complaint process, including information about how to file a complaint, to students, parents, and the general public.

## Advocacy Resources

**Contact the FBI.** In cases of *cyberbullying*, contact the FBI. <http://tinyurl.com/krsqbh5>

**Contact the ACLU.** <http://tinyurl.com/kvqxvd3>

**Contact The Victims of Crime Resource Center.** <http://tinyurl.com/m9td7cw>

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<http://www.stjosephmareello.org> Contact: Joanna at [jullien@surewest.net](mailto:jullien@surewest.net)

Romans 12:2 – And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that may prove what is that good and acceptable perfect will of God.

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*(Resources continued from other side)*

**Take action to shield.** If you have concern for your child's safety, you may need to relocate your child, and/or cancel the phone/social media accounts. <http://tinyurl.com/moh6srw>

### Key concepts

**Peer abuse and conflict.** The difference between peer abuse and peer conflict is power. When there is a perceived power difference wherein an individual is being intimidated because of the social standing or communications capacity (cyber technology) of the harasser, it is considered peer abuse. When peers of equal standing are in dispute, it is considered conflict.

**Cyberbullying and bullying.** Both involve undue influence to dominate, overwhelm or disenfranchise an individual through harassment or intimidation. Cyberbullying involves use of cyber communications, any form of electronic communications, to harass and intimidate. Cyberbullying is considered more serious because the psychological pressure can overwhelm an individual; especially hate speech, which is an attack on an individual based upon race, gender, religion or sexual orientation.

### Gaining proper perspective

The rapidly changing nature of communication technologies puts global youth in circumstances that could not have been anticipated 10 or 20 years ago. The learning community must provide guidance and strategies to students, parents, schools, and society to address online behavior, commonly known as digital citizenship. A primary goal of a digital citizenship curriculum is to reinforce ethical online conduct and discourage risky conduct, which frequently requires a change of behavior. This change, behavior modification, replaces unacceptable behavior with a desired response and is a function of behavior theory. Three theoretical perspectives address the online behaviors of students in Grades 5 through 12: (a) the social norms theory, (b) the social cognitive theory, and (c) the moral development theory.

**Social Norms Theory.** According to Perkins and Berkowitz's social norms theory, a person's behavior is influenced by how others behave and think. People act in a manner that corresponds with what they perceive as normal behavior, by conforming to "group patterns and expectations". According to Perkins, the social norms theory explains instances where people erroneously believe "the attitudes and/or behaviors of peers and other community members to be different than their own when in fact they are not".

**Social Cognitive Theory.** The social cognitive theory is attributed to Bandura's expansion of the social learning theory, which explains and predicts a variety of behaviors based on peer interaction. According to Bandura, students learn from their peers through behavior modeling. Peer modeling is recognized as a major factor in adopting new behaviors in prevention and intervention programs and is linked to the global, connected, online world students live in today. This theory is associated with normative behavior where unethical or deviant behavior is justified because the behavior is considered normal among peers.

**Moral Development Theory.** Kohlberg's theory of moral development, an extension of Piaget's developmental psychology research, posited that children progress through the stages of moral judgment by way of social experiences, not by maturation or the influence of parents or teachers. Kohlberg's continuum of moral development provides a potential theoretical basis for why children demonstrate risky behaviors online.

Children typically move to Stage 3 of 6 during their middle school years and have a corresponding shift in thinking to the accepted societal values and norms. At this stage, interpersonal relationships with family and friends are key—a broadening but still narrow perspective of society. At this stage, Kohlberg proposes that young adults do not think of "society as a whole" until their 20s and 30s. Adolescents learn through social interaction and express that learning through imitation. Cyberbully Research Center: <http://cyberbullying.us/>

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