

Bullying

What is bullying?

Bullying has become an important issue in today's society. According to the National Education Association, a child is being bullied once every seven minutes.

Arkansas law defines bullying as the intentional harassment, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, defamation or threat or incitement of violence by a student against another student. This can take the form of written, verbal, electronic, or physical action. It causes or creates actual or future physical harm to the bullied child, to their property, or interferes with the bullied child's education.

What does bullying look like?

Bullying is intentional, targeted, repeated behavior that can take on many different forms.

Some forms of bullying include:

- Verbal bullying
- Bullying through isolation or social exclusion
- Physical bullying
- Bullying through false rumors and lies
- Taking money or other things
- Being threatened or forced to do things the bully wants
- Racial bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Cyber bullying

Children might not want to report bullying, but it has to be reported to the school. When it is, the school, parents, and school community can put a stop to the bullying.

What do I do if I think my child is being bullied?

1. Report all instances of bullying to the school **in writing**. (Template letters can be found at www.arlegalservices.org.)
2. Ask for a copy of the school's bullying policy.

3. Keep a journal of when bullying happens, your child's story, actions you've take, and the school's response to these reports.
4. Work with the school and the district administration to help stop bullying.
5. If the school administration doesn't cooperate, send a written complaint to the school district and address it to the Superintendent.

If you are still having problems with the school district following its bullying policy, you can make a complaint to the Arkansas Board of Education. You can call 501-682-4212 or mail the complaint to:

Attn Oliver Dillingham
Four Capital Mall, Room 403-A
Little Rock, AR 72201

What can I do as a parent?

1. **Educate** your children about bullying. When you educate them, they will recognize what bullying looks like and let someone know.
2. **Listen** to your child when they talk about what is happening at school. Even if your child is not being bullied, they may have seen bullying behavior.

If your child has a 501 Plan or Individual Education Plan (IEP), there are extra protections for them under Arkansas laws.

If you are having problems with the school helping to resolve the issue, contact your local disability rights center and enlist their help.

What can I do as a student?

You are not alone.

Bullying happens to a lot of people. No one deserves to be bullied and everyone has the right to feel safe at school.

Speak up for yourself and tell people what you need from them. You can make an action plan that includes:

- What is happening to you
- When and where bullying takes place and who is involved
- What you would like to change, how they can be changed, and what can help you gain control of the situation
- Your role in the action plan, who else should be involved, and what they can do

Assert your rights. If the adults at school are not listening to you, tell an adult at home. **Be persistent.**

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