

What Should I Do If My Child Is Being Bullied? - A Toolkit from Raise Your Hand, 2019-20 school year

When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior they send the message that it is not acceptable. Research shows this can stop bullying behavior over time.

Parents, school staff, and other adults in the community can help kids prevent bullying by talking about it, building a safe school environment, and creating a community-wide bullying prevention strategy. – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.stopbullying.gov

The purpose of the Raise Your Hand Bullying Toolkit is to help families navigate the [CPS Anti-Bullying Policy](#) that is found in the [CPS Student Rights & Responsibilities 2019-20](#) (SRR) booklet and the [CPS Policy Manual](#) - updated June 29, 2019. The [Student Code of Conduct \(SCC\)](#) is found within the SRR and begins on PDF page 11 or SCC page 1. CPS Factsheets on the SCC: [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Polish](#)

Within our Toolkit, other resources are provided when appropriate.

The Toolkit also keeps the following [CPS Student Bill of Rights](#) in mind (found in the SRR, pages 1 - 6):
Every student has rights. A right is a freedom or protection that a person has. Rights define what is allowed of a person or owed to a person. Your rights are part of you regardless of your age, race, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, religion, national origin, citizenship/ immigration status, weight, sexual orientation, physical and/or emotional condition, disability, marital status, or political beliefs. Your rights belong to you and cannot be threatened or taken away. The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Student Bill of Rights (SBOR) is a living document that spells out the rights that every student has and that everyone, including students themselves, should respect.


SAFE, SECURE, AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Feel mentally and physically safe and secure in school, and to report any incident that makes them feel unsafe or insecure, including sexual assault, inappropriate remarks, grooming, groping, inappropriate behavior, verbal assault, bullying, or any other type of harassment.1, 2, 3 - Students also have the right to receive regular updates about actions taken in response to their report of not feeling safe. [\(page 5 of SRR\)](#)

If you are not a Chicago Public Schools (CPS) family, much of the below also applies to you. According to the webpage, [Illinois Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies](#) from www.stopbullying.gov, Illinois school districts must adopt bullying prevention policies and these policies “must contain key policy and procedural elements.” Your district has a Student Code of Conduct (SCC), and your school may have its own policies that work within that. Check out your district’s website as well as your school’s. Physical SCCs and school handbooks can also be helpful - this is true for both CPS and non CPS schools.

Remember you are not alone when your child is bullied. There are resources out there to help guide you. We have seen an uptick in parents and students speaking out about bullying at school. Please contact us directly at info@ilraiseyourhand.org if you have any questions about the information provided below or have tried-and-true resources that you think we should add. So do reach out with your resources, experiences, suggestions, and questions.

Immediate Help

- Bullying is Sexual in Nature: [CPS Office of Student Protections and Title IX](#) or 773-535-4400
- There has been a crime or someone is at immediate risk of harm: 911
- Someone is feeling hopeless, helpless, thinking of suicide:
 - Contact the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)  online or at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- The CPS SRR now has a [Referral Resources](#) section (p. 62-64)

Disclaimer: *The Raise Your Hand Bullying Toolkit is made available to provide guidance and general information on responding to bullying and the CPS Student Code of Conduct (SCC), CPS Anti-Bullying Policy, Illinois Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies, and StopBullying.gov. The RYH Bullying Toolkit is not a substitute for professional medical or legal advice and the suggestions below are not necessarily appropriate for every situation. At some point, you may need to seek psychological, psychiatric, or legal assistance. All of the documentation you’ve gathered as a result of following the guidance below should be shared with these outside professionals. Although RYH will try to keep this toolkit accurate and up-to-date, we will have no obligation to do so. RYH disclaims any liability for actions taken or not taken in reliance on the guidance and information contained in the toolkit.*

The Basics

Understanding the definition of bullying, district policies, and additional resources

The child who was bullied.

| Question | Policies and Definitions | What we know |
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| <p>What defines bullying?</p> | <p>CPS defines bullying as <i>any physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students, and meets a set of criteria.</i> The criteria can be found below or in more detail in the CPS Anti-Bullying Policy (page 32 of the 2019-2020 CPS SRR).</p> <p>(1) <i>An observed or perceived imbalance of power exists between the person(s) engaging in the bullying behavior(s) and the targeted student(s); and/or student(s) were targeted based on prejudice or bias (as defined below)</i></p> <p>(2) <i>The behaviors are severe or pervasive (repeated over time), or there is a high likelihood that behaviors will be repeated. While bullying is often characterized by repeated acts, sometimes a single incident constitutes bullying depending on the severity and if other elements of bullying are present.</i></p> <p>(3) <i>The intent of the person(s) engaging in the behavior is to cause physical or emotional harm to the targeted student(s)</i></p> <p>(4) <i>The behavior has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the following effects:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) <i>placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;</i> (b) <i>causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;</i> (c) <i>substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or</i> (d) <i>substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.</i> <p>CPS Student Rights & Responsibilities 2019-20 The CPS Anti-Bullying Policy can be found on pages 32 - 42.</p> <p>Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual Title: Anti-Bullying, Section: 705.5A, Board Report 19-0626-PO4, June 26, 2019</p> | <p>When your child is hurting, it's hard to differentiate between mean-kid behavior and bullying. Here are some Facts About Bullying from stopbullying.gov.</p> <p>All actions and steps within the school and network will be governed by the CPS definition of bullying.</p> <p>The CPS Anti-Bullying Policy which we reference throughout is part of the CPS SCC- pages 32 - 42.</p> |
| <p>What forms of bullying does CPS recognize?</p> | <p>All forms.</p> <p><i>Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation, one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.</i> (page 34. CPS Anti-Bully Policy)</p> | <p>Bullying comes in all forms that indicate an imbalance of power.</p> |

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| <p>Does bullying include cyberbullying?</p> | <p>Yes.</p> <p><i>Cyberbullying means using information and communication technologies to bully. This definition includes cyberbullying by means of technology that is not owned, leased, or used by the school district when an administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred. This Policy does not require a district or school to staff or monitor any non school-related activity, function, or program. (page 34. CPS Anti-Bullying Policy)</i></p> | <p>Although cyberbullying may take place outside of school, it is imperative that you document occurrences. See “What do I document?” below for information on how to document cyberbullying.</p> <p>The school is not responsible for monitoring cyberbullying that is taking place. However, they need to be made aware of it.</p> |
| <p>What do I document?</p> | <p>Everything. Documenting everything in writing is one of the most critical steps.</p> <p>By documenting every interaction that shows a pattern of targeted bullying there is a greater chance the bullying will be addressed. This is done through writing it down, screenshots on a phone or computer, keeping emails in a dedicated folder in your email account, keeping any paperwork in a file folder, etc.</p> <p>Bullying: Time. Date. Incident. Witnesses. Where it happened. Keep emails between teachers and administrators in one central location. Take screenshots of texts or social media occurrences (or photo of the screen with a separate camera if it is a Snap so they do not know you took a screenshot if you feel it would increase the bullying by taking a Snap screenshot.) Write down any incident your child tells you about or if your child is able and feels safe have them write it down on their own in a notebook.</p> <p>Verbal Dialogue: Conversation between CPS staff (teacher, aide, administration, etc.) and parent should be put in an email as a summary and sent to school staff by the parent. This should be done every time. Keep these sent emails and any replies in a dedicated folder in your email account so you can find them quickly if needed.</p> | <p>When it comes time to meet with a teacher or administrator parents are often caught off guard because it is a verbal complaint of the bullying incident(s) that has been gnawing at your child. Bullying does not arrive into your family’s life neatly packaged. It is messy and can escalate fast or be a slow prolonged nightmare. It is hard to summarize bullying in writing. Do your best to write stuff down in a notebook or keep a file folder with your notes.</p> <p>A quick email following a verbal conversation ensures that everyone has a clear understanding of what was discussed and the expectations for follow-up.</p> |

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| <p>Who do I communicate with?</p> | <p>Email the teacher. Email the administration. Is there a counselor and/or social worker you can include? Is there an aide who is close with your child? CPS employees and contractors must intervene and have the ability to report the bullying.</p> <p>The school is your first line of defense to protect your child: <i>All CPS principals and staff shall work to develop safe, supportive school environments that prevent bullying through: Developing Supportive School Climate Strategies, teaching all students SEL skills, effective disciplinary practices.</i> (page 35, CPS Anti-Bullying Policy)</p> | <p>This is where school and district protocols as well as Social Emotional Learning (SEL) will come into play. What does the school have posted on its website as a bullying protocol? Become familiar with your own school's policy.</p> <p>Every school should have at least one dedicated counselor and a social worker who is at school at some point during the week. Get their names and emails.</p> <p>The school should help your child feel safe and help come up with a plan.</p> |
| <p>What can I expect from the school once I report bullying?</p> | <p>Steps for Investigating Bullying Reports (page 36, CPS Anti-Bullying Policy)</p> <p>Immediate: Ensure Safety</p> <p>Within One School Day: Notify students and community when applicable. <i>Notifications should be made privately to students directly involved and their parents/guardians. ... when incidents have a larger impact on the school community, the Principal/Designee shall provide clear communication to students, staff and parents to reinforce school-wide expectations and a climate of respect and inclusion.</i></p> <p>Within Two School Days: Document all allegations of bullying. Principal/Designee will document the allegation in the District student information system, currently known as Verify, as a general incident report and document all notifications made.</p> <p>Within Five School Days: The Principal and/or a designee, who is knowledgeable about bullying prevention and intervention, shall perform the investigation.</p> | <p>There is additional information in the SCC than that found to the left, so please reference the SCC beginning on 36.</p> <p>All parties should be notified of the bullying report within one day of its filing. The SCC does not indicate how that communication will arrive. Do document it and keep it if it comes in writing or via email. If you receive a phone call, note the name of the person and record their phone number into your documentation.</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigation of reported bullying shall be initiated within 5 school days of receipt of a report, documented within the incident report in the District student information system, and completed within 10 school days, unless the Principal grants in writing an additional 5-day extension due to extenuating circumstances. The Principal/Designee shall document the extension in the investigation report and shall notify the parties involved. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify involved parties ○ Conducting individual interviews ○ Frequency of occurrences ○ Assessing effects <p>Determine if the bullying allegations are substantiated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Principal/Designee shall consider whether the four elements of the bullying definition are met, or if all four elements of bullying are not present, whether the behavior qualifies as another inappropriate behavior listed in the SCC. When the investigation is complete, the Principal/Designee shall ensure the investigation and findings (whether the report of bullying is substantiated or not substantiated) are documented in the District student information system. If the investigation determines a student engaged in bullying behaviors and/or other inappropriate behaviors listed in the SCC, the Principal/Designee shall prepare a Misconduct Report. <p>Notify All Parties of the Outcome of the Investigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Within one day of making a determination, the Principal/Designee shall notify, in writing, the parents/legal guardians of all students involved of the outcome of the investigation. | <p>As indicated in the final step, all parties should receive, in writing, the outcome of the investigation within one day of its completion. Keep this and add it to your documentation.</p> <p>If you have any concerns about the investigative process that is taking place and/or you do not feel it is being handled in the best interest of your child, contact the CPS Parent Support Center (773) 553-3772 and email BullyingReport@cps.edu. All of your documentation will be helpful here.</p> <p>Please do not hesitate to also reach out to your Network Chief. All of your documentation will be helpful here.</p> <p>Continue reading for an appeal process if you are not satisfied with the outcome.</p> |
| <p>What is the CPS Bullying Complaint Form?</p> <p>Can a parent file one as well as the school?</p> | <p><i>All CPS employees and contractors, including security officers, lunchroom staff and bus drivers, who witness incidents of bullying or school violence or who possess reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying must intervene, report incident on the CPS Bullying Complaint Form (Attachment A), and cooperate with the implementation of a safety plan (page 35 and 35, CPS Anti-Bullying Policy).</i></p> <p>CPS Bullying Complaint Form: downloadable & printable pdf</p> | <p>It is found on page 42 of the SCC. It is labeled "Attachment A, Chicago Public Schools, Form for Reporting Bullying and Retaliation." Note: We will refer to it as the CPS Bullying Complaint Form.</p> |

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| | <p><i>Notify parents/guardians of all involved students. Within one school day of receipt of a bullying report, the Principal/Designee shall report to the parent/legal guardian of all involved students, via telephone, personal conference and/or in writing, the occurrence of any alleged incident of bullying, and shall document these notifications in the District student information system. (page 36-38, CPS Anti-Bullying Policy)</i></p> <p>When a CPS Bullying Complaint Form is filled out it prompts an investigation. If the complaint form is emailed to BullyingReport@cps.edu they will direct the concern to the proper Network.</p> <p>The CPS Bullying Complaint Form is found on page 42 of the SCC as part of the CPS Anti-Bullying Policy. The Form is labeled "Attachment A."</p> <p>CPS Bullying Complaint Form: downloadable & printable pdf</p> | <p>Parents may also report the bullying incident(s) via the CPS Bullying Complaint Form.</p> <p>As an advocate for your child, you have a right to report bullying incidents independently to CPS by email to BullyingReport@cps.edu in addition to reporting it to your Principal/Designee. Send an email answering all the questions on the CPS Bullying Complaint Form OR fill it out and email a picture of it.</p> <p>Call the CPS Parent Support Center at (773) 553-3772 if you have any question or to follow up on your email.</p> <p>CPS has no idea what is going on and how large or small of a problem is taking place within their schools if it is not reported. Yes, they should be getting a copy of the bullying investigation via the student information system as stated above but there may be a delay or confusion within the school about reporting.</p> |
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| <p>Who fills out the CPS Bullying Complaint Form?</p> | <p>Parents. Witnesses. CPS Educators. Contractors.</p> <p>NOTE: The reporter may remain anonymous, but no discipline will be imposed based solely upon an anonymous report.</p> <p>Submit the CPS Bullying Complaint Form to the principal or any school staff member. Keep a copy for yourself and document when you handed it in and who you gave it to. You may also call the Parent Support Center (773 553-3772) or email the CPS Bullying Complaint Form to BullyingReport@cps.edu.</p> <p>You can find the CPS Bullying Complaint Form on page 42 of the SCC as part of the CPS Anti-Bullying Policy. The Form is labeled "Attachment A."</p> <p>CPS Bullying Complaint Form: downloadable & printable pdf</p> | <p>If a CPS Bullying Complaint Form is filled out on paper and handed to a school staff member or District employee, keep a copy of it and record the date, time, and name of person who took the form. Add this to your documentation.</p> <p>In addition, we recommend an email. Take a picture of this form, scan it, or type its contents into an email and send it to BullyingReport@cps.edu. Add this email to your documentation.</p> |
| <p>Does your school have an anonymous online bullying report form?</p> | <p>At least one CPS school used an online bullying report form on their school website. It went directly to the Assistant Principal. This allowed for victims, students, parents, and community members to report bullying (anonymously or not) in a safe thoughtful space from home.</p> <p>The online bullying report form a school might utilize does not replace the CPS Bullying Complaint Form. (page 42, CPS Anti-Bullying Policy)</p> <p>CPS Bullying Complaint Form: downloadable & printable pdf</p> | <p>This may be a tool buried in your school's website and, if so, inquire how often it is checked and the discretion of the educators checking it.</p> <p>An online bullying form is an opportunity for those students who are scared to speak up in front of an adult and those who are upstanders to support the victim. It is also an approach, when used schoolwide, to help the administration gain a pulse on the culture and climate of the school.</p> |

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| <p>Who are the upstanders in the school?</p> | <p>Although the term “upstanders” is not mentioned directly in the CPS SCC, by definition it reflects an anti-bullying support system.</p> <p>Upstander: a person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied</p> <p>Upstanders bear witness to the bullying and support those who are victimized. It is a system to directly bring awareness of bullying to the kids and demonstrate that it is everyone's responsibility to create an anti-bullying culture.</p> <p>Additional Upstander Information can be found at StopBullying.gov.</p> | <p>Upstanders are powerful people to a child who is bullied. It is the hope that all schools promote and model upstander behavior in their SEL conversations. If it is not already evident through your school's culture & anti-bullying protocols, ask your teachers and administration where and how they support upstanders.</p> |
| <p>What else do I need to know?</p> | <p>If my child has an IEP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>If the student who engaged in bullying behavior is a student with a disability, the school shall convene the IEP Team to determine if additional supports and services are needed to address the inappropriate behavior and develop the student's social and emotional skills.</i> (page 38, CPS Anti-Bullying Policy) <p>The school must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Dismiss bullying as typical student behavior or assume it is not serious.</i> (page 39, CPS Anti-Bullying Policy) ● <i>Solicit an apology from the student who engaged in bullying to the targeted student or mandate a public apology, use peace circles, victim/offender conferences, or any form of mediation that puts the student who engaged in bullying in contact with the targeted student in an immediate attempt to resolve the bullying.</i> (page 39, CPS Anti-Bullying Policy) <p>For information on an appeal process: page 39, CPS Anti-Bullying Policy.</p> <p>The CPS SRR now has a Referral Resources section (p. 62-64)</p> | <p>You are the advocate for your child. Bullying should not be dismissed. Call the CPS Parent Support Center at (773) 553-3772 if you have any questions that may not have been answered by your teacher or administrator.</p> <p>Any party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal to the Office of Student Protections and Title IX, or OSP (telephone: 773 535- 4400), within 15 calendar days of notification of the Principal's decision.</p> |
| <p>Summary</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know the definition of bullying (The school and the district are going to use the above definition, and all steps are governed by this definition.) 2. Document. Document. Document. 3. Email and communicate with the teachers and administration. 4. Understand what you can expect from the school and district. 5. Fill out a CPS Bullying Complaint Form. 6. Become aware of other possible online bullying reporting systems. 7. Understand how your school is proactive to support upstanders and anti-bullying culture. | |

