



Statutory Obligation

K.S.A. 72-8256(a)(2) requires local boards of education to:

- Adopt a policy to prohibit bullying on or while utilizing school property, in a school vehicle or at a school-sponsored activity or event.
- Adopt and implement a plan to address bullying (at the same locations as above). The plan must include provisions for the training and education of staff members and students. In addition, upon request, KSDE will assist schools in the development of a grade appropriate curriculum for character development programs.
- Address cyber bullying in policy and planning

Definition of Bullying

K.S.A. 72-8256 (a)(1)(A) The legal definition of bullying in Kansas requires bullying to be severe, persistent or pervasive. 2013 HB 2261 requires that the board of education of each school district shall adopt a policy to prohibit bullying *either by any student, staff member or parent towards a student or by a student, staff member or parent towards a staff member* on or while utilizing school property, in a school vehicle or at a school-sponsored activity or event. Refer questions to Kent Reed at (785) 296-8109 or kreed@ksde.org.

Although definitions of bullying vary, the USDE states that bullying involves the following:

- Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
- Bullying usually (but not always) involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
- Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Types of Bullying

- **Verbal bullying:** Verbal abuse is the most common form of bullying seen at school. It accounts for 70% of reported bullying and is often very difficult to detect. Verbal bullying occurs when someone uses language to gain power over his or her peers. Examples include: name calling, teasing, taunting, threatening, cruel criticism, belittling, personal defamation, racist slurs, personal defamation, sexually suggestive and/or abusive remarks, and extortion (i.e. demanding lunch money via threats).
- **Physical bullying:** Physical bullying is the most visible and therefore identifiable form of bullying incidents reported by children. Physical bullying occurs when a person uses overt bodily acts to gain power over peers. Unlike other types of bullying in schools, physical bullying is easy to identify because the acts are so obvious. Physical bullies tend to demonstrate high levels of aggression from a young age and are more likely to be boys. Examples include: hitting, tripping, shoving, slapping, punching, kicking, damaging or destroying personal property, hazing and/or biting.
- **Relational bullying:** Relational bullying is the systematic diminishment of a targeted child's sense of self through the following that could lead to rejection and/or alienation. Relational Aggression (R.A.) is a form of [bullying](#) common among tweens, and especially tween girls. The behavior describes an individual,

KSDE Bullying Prevention 2013-2014 Fact Sheet

or a group of individuals, who try to hurt a peer, or sacrifice another's standing within their peer group. Girls who exhibit Relational Aggression are sometimes referred to as [Mean Girls](#). Examples include ignoring, isolating, excluding, shunning (act of omission) and/or gossiping.

- **Cyber bullying:** "Cyber bullying" means bullying by use of any electronic communication device through means including, but not limited to: e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, mobile phones, pagers, online games and websites.

What Schools Can Do to Prevent Bullying¹

- **Assess bullying in your school.** Determine where and when bullying occurs.
- **Increase adult supervision in bullying "hot spots."** Work with support staff, such as cafeteria staff, bus stop and playground monitors and bus drivers, who may observe bullying incidents that unfold outside the classroom.
- **Involve students, parents, teachers, and staff in bullying prevention.** Establish a school safety committee and task force with a coordinator whose job it is to plan, implement and evaluate your school's bullying prevention program.
- **Encourage teachers and staff to file incident reports of bullying.** Keep track of critical incidents, and assess and evaluate your bullying prevention program.
- **Create policies and rules.** Create a mission statement, code of conduct, and school-wide rules that establishes a climate in which bullying is not acceptable. Disseminate and communicate widely.
- **Integrate bullying prevention material into curriculum and school activities.** Implement curriculum-based, class-level discussions and activities about bullying (e.g., role-playing activities) at each grade level.
- **Promote extracurricular activities.** Reinforce positive social interactions in an inclusive environment.
- **Raise awareness about your bullying prevention initiative.** Launch an awareness campaign to make the objectives known to the school, parents, and community members.
- **Establish a school culture of acceptance, tolerance and respect.** Take advantage of staff meetings, assemblies, class and parent meetings, newsletters to families, the school website, and the student handbook.

KSDE Resources

Safe Schools Resource Center:
<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3878>
Safe and Supportive Schools (S3):
<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?alias=www.ksde.org/s3>
School Counseling Resources:
<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1799>

Contact Information: For further information, please contact Kent Reed at kreed@ksde.org or by calling 785-296-8109.

¹ Stop Bullying Now! <http://www.stopbullying.gov/educators/preventing/index.html>