

## What can be done?

Continued

If it doesn't stop, then there need to be reasonable consequences. The adult must keep checking to make sure that it has stopped.

### Bullying and Schools

In an effectively run school, the principal should be at the top of the pecking order. In an effectively run classroom the teacher should be at the top of the pecking order. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Principals can sometimes feel bullied by parents, superintendents and even students. Teachers can feel bullied by hard-to-handle students. This is a recipe for dysfunction in the classroom and the school. Another problem occurs, however, when the principal or the teacher is at the top of the pecking order, but they have achieved that position through bullying tactics. Again, this is sadly quite common. What it does is legitimate bullying as a strategy all the way down the line. It is a "strategy" rooted in fear. Principals and teachers – adults generally – serve kids best when their authority is grounded in consistency, respect and personal integrity.

Barabara Coloroso has called the zero-tolerance approach a zero-thinking approach. Bullying is often a symptom of other things. If we slam down on the bully, we do not get at the root of the problem. These kids too need to be listened to and understood – and this takes time – something many adults do not feel they can give. If we bully and

shame bullies with our punishments, we only reinforce the negative behaviour.

Finally, here are ten things for bullied kids to remember:

### 10 Tips for Bullied Kids

1. Don't deny that bullying is happening.
2. Don't accept the bully's comments as truth statements.
3. The bullying behavior belongs to the bully. You have done nothing wrong.
4. Realize that you have basic rights like the right to safety.
5. Find an adult you can trust and tell that adult about the bullying.
6. If you want, tell the adult how you want him or her to handle it.
7. Trust your feelings and intuition. You are not crazy or stupid.
8. Don't laugh at jokes told about you.
9. Depend on yourself and those who love you for your self-esteem, not other people.
10. Stand up for other bullied kids.

*Michael Reist is Head of the English Department at Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School in Caledon East. He has been teaching and mentoring teenagers for 20 years. He is available to speak on various aspects of bullying and can be contacted at michael.reist@dpcdsb.org.*

65% of kids say they worry at least a little about getting hurt or robbed by other people at school. 39% say they worry about it a lot.



Drawing by Savannah, www.bullying.org

### Is Your Child Being Bullied?

#### The Warning Signs

1. Shows an abrupt lack of interest in school, or refuses to go to school
2. Takes an unusual route to school
3. Suffers drop in grades
4. Withdraws from family and school activities
5. Is hungry after school
6. Steals money from home
7. Makes a beeline to the bathroom when arriving home
8. Is sad, sullen, angry, or scared after receiving a phone call or email
9. Does something out of character
10. Has torn or missing clothing
11. Uses derogatory or demeaning language when talking about peers
12. Stops talking about peers and everyday activities
13. Has physical injuries not consistent with explanation
14. Has stomachaches, headaches, panic attacks, is unable to sleep, sleeps too much, is exhausted
15. Plays alone, or prefers to hang with adults

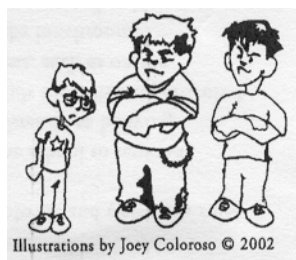
*from the bully, the bullied and the bystander, Barbara Coloroso © 2002*

*Only 25% of students report that teachers intervene in bullying situations, while 71% of teachers believe they always intervene*

42% of kids ages 6-8 say they worry a lot about getting hurt or robbed by other people at school, compared with 40% of kids ages 9-11 and 35% of kids

### Tips for Bullies:

- \*Learn to recognize your "temper triggers". If someone pushes your buttons, take a deep breath and walk away.
- \*Express things differently by channeling your energy into doing something active or creative.
- \*Think about how good you feel when you treat others with respect.
- \*Cool down – try not to act in anger. Take a walk, listen to music, call a friend.
- \*Weigh the odds – decide if bullying is worth getting into trouble, hurting yourself or others and turning others away from you.



Illustrations by Joey Coloroso © 2002

Every seven minutes a student is bullied in the schoolyard; Every twenty-five minutes a student is bullied in the classroom.

### Where can you get more information?

Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario  
1-800-488-5666  
<http://apsgo.on.ca>

Canadian Mental Health Association  
519-938-8776

Catholic Family Services of Dufferin & Peel  
888-940-0584

Community First Resource Centre  
519-942-0443 Orangeville  
519-928-3383 Grand Valley  
519-925-5504 Shelburne

Community Mental Health Clinic  
519-941-0465

Dufferin Child and Family Services and Children's Mental Health Service  
519-941-1530

Dufferin Parent Support Network  
519-940-8678  
[www.dpsn.info](http://www.dpsn.info)

Family Counselling Support Services  
800-307-7078  
[www.familyserviceguelph.on.ca](http://www.familyserviceguelph.on.ca)

Family Transition Place  
519-942-4122  
[www.ftp.on.ca](http://www.ftp.on.ca)

Ontario Secondary School Teacher's Federation  
519-824-1754  
[www.osstf.on.ca](http://www.osstf.on.ca)