

# THE FIGHT OF YOUR LIFE

Bully Information from [Imbullyfree.org](http://Imbullyfree.org)

713 478-3049



## Preface

This book has been written to support all the children who have been bullied and no one helped. To all the families that have lost a child to suicide when their child felt that suicide was a better outcome than being bullied every day.

If you are reading this book, your child may have fallen into this trap and you as a parent are seeking answers and help when the system fails your child. Across this nation and around the world we are seeing an epidemic of bullying, cyberbullying and harassment. Why are we seeing an increase? In the 70's when I was in High School if someone was bullied, we were told by Principals that it will pass or this is just part of life. This was the attitude a lot of Administrators conveyed to our children. In some ways this message is still told to your child across the nation in today's climate. I believe that with the invention of the internet, a family can make a post to face book, twitter, YouTube or other social media outlets and millions of people around the world are aware of this families bullying problems in the matter of minutes. The world can now be made aware of your child's problem. Also children can also see the all of the bad messages about bullying. In some ways social media is your friend and then a few posts later, the web becomes your family's worst night mare. Organizations can no longer cover up bullying issues.

Every organization has a mission statement, but it means very little if we cannot support your family during your time of need. We continue to review national government anti bully programs and I see little if no help from these groups. There is a lot of important information, but it seems these sites are information only. In retrospect, if you have an accident at work, OSHA completes an investigation and the company may be held accountable. If a company is poisoning the atmosphere with waste from their plants, then the EPA will investigate and either fine the company or suspend operations. If there is an airplane crash, NTSB investigates the accident and the FAA determines who is going to be held accountable. My point, there are numerous organizations that protect the public from companies that are not complaint. These organizations are not associated with the companies or groups that they are investigating. This is called an independent or unbiased investigation.

When parents make a complaint to the School Administrators dealing with bullying, cyber bullying, etc. this one person determines the outcome of the investigation. Even if you file a grievance, the school board members work for the school and not your family. I have witnessed these board findings and heard from parents that the board had no findings against the child that bullied your child or no findings against a teacher that may have bullied your child.

Parents must advocate for their child, and this book will educate the parents and empower your child.

Special thanks to Cheri White and Lisa Reyna Loe for all their reviews and inputs to this valuable document.

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## Chapter 1

### Who is Imbullyfree.org?



Imbullyfree.org is a nonprofit organization and our sole mission is to advocate for families when their child is being bullied and the parents are not receiving the proper help to stop ongoing bullying. This is our Goal.

I'm Bully Free's mission is to be a Center of Excellence and provide support and raise awareness to schools that have declared a commitment to creating and maintaining a **Bully-Free, Safe and Secure environment**. I'm Bully Free has schools, universities, corporations, and supporters around the world! Our stakeholders includes schools, students, teachers and community members that work together to ensure that everyone feels respected, safe, and valued. Is your child being BULLIED by another student or staff member? Is the School District helping the situation? We can help! Call us at 713-478-3049. We will help!

We started this non profit in March 2012. When you look for older anti bully organizations you will not find many older than Imbullyfree.org. The fight starts when the School Administrators, School Board, teachers or coaches ignore that your child is being bullied. Why would a grown up that is there to protect your child ignore a potential crime being perpetrated against your family. Imbullyfree.org and other like organizations ask the same question every day. Why is this child being ignored? I will list some of the complaints from parents that we have interviewed give when trying to get someone to take action and stop the bully incidents.

1. The teacher did nothing to stop the bullying incident. Taking on a continuous bully incident, can take a lot of time. This is one of the most frequent complaints we hear from parents and the children.
2. A child was attacked or sexually assaulted and the school handles this investigation. We are hearing about these situations every day on the news and other social media outlets. If these types of attacks occurred at the mall, movies or other public places the police would be called and in a lot of cases someone would be charged with a crime. When the schools complete the investigation they give the same excuse to the parents. WE CAN NOT REALASE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE CASE, BECAUSE THE CHILDREN INVOLVED ARE MINORS. Parents are not even afforded the decency to be apprised of the final investigation outcome. When I hear this statement, I know that the school administrators are no longer going to talk the parents or the news reporters. Again, do a search on Google and see what you find. It will truly amaze you of some of the incidents that are documented on social media that are never properly handled by the schools. When someone attacks your child or sexually assaults your child, this is not

bullying but a CRIME. When two children agree to fight, this is mutual combat. Both parties agree to fight. This behavior has been going on for years. When a person or a group attacks your child it is a CRIME.

3. The School Superintendent was aware of these problems and is potentially covering up the incidents because if the truth is told, the school will look bad, maybe guilty of crime, protecting a child or teacher, and list goes on.
4. The parent had hundreds of pages of documents, video or audio evidence and no one was held accountable when the family filed an official grievance at the school board. How can a school board be unbiased when they are investigating an incident that could negatively impact the school, the Superintendent or a teacher?
5. A child was either bullied or cyber bullied and committed suicide and no one was held accountable. NO ONE WAS HELD ACCOUNTABLE.
6. A child is now seeing a psychiatrist or psychologist because no one in the school stopped the ongoing bullying. Your family is now paying for medications and counseling, possibly for the rest of your child's life, simply because no one intervened when the initial bully started.
7. Your child is one of the 160,000 children according to the CDC that misses school on a daily basis because they are afraid of someone bullying them.

## Chapter 2

### Steps When Advocating for Your Child

What are the steps?

Our team receives calls from a parent requesting help. I wish we could fill out a bully incident form and the matter would go away. Unfortunately this very seldom happens. In fact when a parent calls 713 478-3049 the system has failed their family. If you do not believe me, just type in bully incidents on a Google search and you will find pages of bullying reports from the news and other outlets. Thousands of families are making reports about their children being assaulted every day and no one is helping. Yes we do have a problem around the world. When one of our team members receives the call, how do we help the family? It starts with our advocate listening to your concerns. In a lot instances the mom or dad is worried about their child's safety. In a lot of incidents the bullying may have been going on for years and NOTHING was done to help that family. What Imbullyfree.org does, IS GIVE THE FAMILY HOPE? I have had parents start to cry because they now have an organization that will listen and give this family a systematic plan to stop the bullying. Every step that will be discussed may or may not apply, but with our experience dealing with bullying, these steps have helped a lot of families.

**STEP ONE:** Contact the teacher and/or the Principal.

If this is the first time hearing about the bullying incident, you as a parent should contact the teacher and or the principal about what has happened to your child. This will start the investigation process. All 50 states have passed anti bullying legislation. This means that every state has some form of anti bully laws to protect your child. Imbullyfree.org has reviewed the majority of these laws during our investigations. When the school follows their anti bully procedures that are documented by the school handbook, school board polices, or other forms, the bullying incident can be rectified very quickly and your family can return to a normal life.

When the system fails your child, this is when Imbullyfree.org starts an external audit on the schools bully processes. These procedures are MANDATORY in accordance with your states anti bully/harassment laws. If you know the schools anti bully requirements, then you now have a better chance to represent your child when you talk to the teacher, principal or the school administrator. For instance, in a lot of the school procedures, someone from the school must contact the parent when a bully incident occurs or the school is made aware of the incident. We see this step fail time after time. Parents complain that no one from the school has made contact about their child being bullied. If you are not satisfied with the bully investigation, you should consider filing a grievance with the school board.

**STEP TWO:** You must file a Grievance with the school board. Each school district has different requirements for a Grievance. We will help you help you when it is time to file the difference grievances for your school district. See Chapter 3 for examples of Grievance

**STEP THREE:** Contact the police. What we are hearing many complaints from parents after their child is hurt at school. See Chapter 4 for reporting a crime to the police.

**STEP FOUR:** Contact your state elected officials such as your State Representative, State Senator, State Congress Person, Mayor, Governor, or anyone else in the government that you may personally know.

**STEP FIVE:** Contact CPS. This is a group that you may consider calling. From my interview from parents CPS may not consider bullying as a CPS problem. You still may want to call CPS, especially if you are afraid to send your child to school.

**STEP SIX:** Contact your District Attorney, there will be a chapter on the DA's office. You may consider following up with the DA's office if there was a serious crime was committed against your child

**STEP SEVEN:** Contact the news media. The media is a good source to contact and let the world know what happened to your family. This has good and bad effects. Millions of people will hear what happened to your child, but parents have stated that child was treated unfairly by the Principal, teachers and students. This is one consideration that your family should discuss before contacting the media. Remember, in a lot of instances the media may only post one story and the media is not there to advocate for your family. We have seen relation from the bully and the school administration.

**STEP EIGHT:** Contact the face book, twitter pages or other social media outlets. When you post something on one of the pages, you should expect a lot of support and in some cases the families have be attacked by the media trolls. This is just another consideration to discuss with your family. I have seen videos go viral and this is an excellent resource to get the word out to the world about your child's problem.

**STEP NINE:** Make your own face book page. I have seen parents start a public page or a private page. If you are the administrator of your page, you can control who is allowed to post on the page, and the content that is allowed on your page. The positive impacts of social media; this shows your child that they are not alone in this fight. When we have helped a family start a page, families have seen the child become more positive.

These are some of our trusted anti bully sites that will help you spread the word about what has happened to your family. There are thousands or anti bully pages that will help.

<https://www.facebook.com/lmbullyfree.org501c3/> - lmbullyfree.org page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/369133449875776/> - Bully Bear Speaks the Truth page

[https://www.facebook.com/TheKranioKid/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/TheKranioKid/?ref=br_rs) - The Kranio Kid page

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=274951729638051> - Isaac Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Awareness page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/170099129760472/> - Bullying Student/Athletes Anti- Bullying Community page

[https://www.facebook.com/Bullying-Is-For-Losers-381232881972329/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/Bullying-Is-For-Losers-381232881972329/?ref=br_rs) – Bullying Is For Losers

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/670836723003800/?ref=bookmarks> – Kidz in Development Tour

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1863199247292690> - IMBULLYFREE.ORG WEST TENNESSEE CHAPTER page

<https://www.facebook.com/WIBullyFree/> - Wisconsin Bully Free Chapter page

[https://www.facebook.com/doawaywithbullying/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/doawaywithbullying/?ref=br_rs) - Imbullyfreepa.org page

<https://www.facebook.com/SFTSorg/> - Stand for the Silent (Official) page

<https://www.facebook.com/ThePeytonHeartProject/> - The Payton Heart Project page



## Chapter 3

### Complaint or Grievance Example

Student or parent complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies listed below. Some of these policies require appeals to be submitted. Below are some examples for reasons to file a grievance at the School Board

1. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, gender, national origin, disability, or religion shall be submitted.
2. Complaints concerning dating violence shall be submitted.
3. Complaints concerning retaliation related to discrimination and harassment shall be submitted.
4. Complaints concerning bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be submitted.
5. Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504 shall be submitted,
6. Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District shall be submitted in accordance with CKE.

#### LEVEL ONE

Complaint forms must be filed:

1. Within 15 days of the date the student or parent first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
2. With the lowest level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem.

In most circumstances, students and parents shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal.

If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the Superintendent or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forwards the complaint form to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall investigate as necessary and schedule a conference with the student or parent within ten days after receipt of the written complaint. The administrator may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the administrator shall provide the student or parent a written response within ten days following the conference. In reaching a decision, the administrator may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the administrator believes will help resolve the complaint.

## LEVEL TWO

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level One response deadline.

After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One administrator shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Level Two administrator. The student or parent may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the student or parent at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One administrator in reaching the Level One decision.

The Superintendent or designee shall schedule a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level One. At the conference, the student or parent may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The Superintendent or designee may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the student or parent a written response within ten days following the conference. In reaching a decision, the Superintendent or designee may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Superintendent or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

## LEVEL THREE

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may appeal the decision to the Board.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the District, within ten days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level Two response deadline.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the Board.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two appeal. The student or parent may request a copy of the Level Two record.

The Level Two record shall include:

1. The Level One record.
2. The notice of appeal from Level One to Level Two.
3. The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the administration in reaching the Level Two decision.

The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level Two, except that if at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the student or parent notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.

The District shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. [See BE]

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation, including an opportunity for the student or parent and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

In addition to any other record of the Board meeting required by law, the Board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three presentation. The Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the student or parent or the student's representative, any presentation from the administration, and questions from the Board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio recording, or court reporter.

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board does not make a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

## Chapter 4

### When Should a Parent Call the Local Police?

For this chapter I will use some guidance from the Attorneys General Office for the state of Texas. As we look at this section it becomes clear with our experience that a lot of schools across this country are not calling the Police after their child was injured because of an assault from a bully. For some reason the School Administrators feel that have a right to investigate a potential crime and keep the findings in-house. We hear this from parents that are complaining that after the investigation by the school administrator or the school board, the parents are not given the outcome of the investigation. In fact in a lot of cases the child that has assaulted your child is right back in school within the a few days. I must agree that some of the injuries are accidents and the police should not be called. In my opinion, if your child is beaten bad enough that parents seeks the evaluation of doctor, then this is no longer bullying, but may be assault and battery. For instance, if your child is attacked at the mall and is injured, the mall cops or the mall manager does not complete the investigation, someone from the police department completes the investigation and the parents are giving the final report.

The follow is an example from the State of Texas. Let's review some of the guidance from the Texas Attorney General Office.

[file:///F:/1%20Anit%20Bully%20Audits%20by%20State/TEXAS/A.%20TEXAS%20Checklist/schoolcrime\\_2013%20reporting%20.pdf](file:///F:/1%20Anit%20Bully%20Audits%20by%20State/TEXAS/A.%20TEXAS%20Checklist/schoolcrime_2013%20reporting%20.pdf)

School Crime and Discipline Handbook 2013, A Practical Reference guide, REV 4/14

Enclosed is a link to the handbook, but for our purpose of this book I will reference some of the key points to make our point.

#### Reporting Serious Crimes

In general, a principal should report all serious criminal activity to law enforcement officials. A principal is required to notify the school district's police department, if one exists and the local law enforcement agency if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe that any of the following activities occur in school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property:

- conduct that may constitute murder,
- capital murder,
- aggravated kidnapping,
- indecency with a child,
- sexual assault,
- aggravated assault,
- aggravated sexual assault,
- injury to a child or an elderly or disabled person,
- arson,
- robbery,
- aggravated robbery or burglary;

- deadly conduct under Section 22.05 of the Penal Code;
- terroristic threat under Section 22.07 of the Penal Code;
- use, sale or possession of a controlled substance, drug paraphernalia or marijuana;
- possession of illegal weapons and devices;
- conduct that may constitute engaging in organized criminal activity under Section 71.02 of the Penal Code; or
- Conduct that may constitute a criminal offense for which a student may be expelled under Education Code Section 37.007 (a), (d) or (e). 12 (See discussion on “Illegal activities that must be reported” on page 39.)

In addition to notifying law enforcement about such activities, the law requires that a principal also notify each instructional or support employee at the school who has regular contact with the student whose conduct is the subject of the notice.

The principal or the designee who makes such a report is required to include the name and address of each person suspected of participating in the illegal activity.

**Note** that the law requires principals to report these activities regardless of whether they involve any students and regardless of whether the activity is investigated by school security officers.

After reading the guidance from the Attorney General Office, it sure seems that schools in Texas should be calling the local police when something serious happens at the school. Even if the parents call the police, the school is still obligated to contact an agency.

As a parent who is advocating for their child, this is just another avenue that will help you when you go to the principal or school board.

## Chapter 5

### Bullying and Youth with Disabilities and Special Health Needs

This section deals with children with Disabilities and Special Health Needs. They are protected by Federal Law. When we are interview a parent about bullying we always ask if their child has a disability. When bullying is directed at a child because of his or her established disability and it creates a hostile environment at school, bullying behavior may cross the line and become “disability harassment.” Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the school must address the harassment. We have provided a lot of good information that may answer some crucial questions.

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/special-needs/>

Children with disabilities—such as physical, developmental, intellectual, emotional, and sensory disabilities—are at an increased risk of being bullied. Any number of factors— physical vulnerability, social skill challenges, or intolerant environments—may increase the risk. Research suggests that some children with disabilities may bully others as well.

Kids with special health needs, such as epilepsy or food allergies, also may be at higher risk of being bullied. Bullying can include making fun of kids because of their allergies or exposing them to the things they are allergic to. In these cases, bullying is not just serious; it can mean life or death.

- [Creating a Safe Environment for Youth with Disabilities](#)
- [Creating a Safe Environment for Youth with Special Health Needs](#)
- [Federal Civil Rights Laws and Youth with Disabilities](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)

### Creating a Safe Environment for Youth with Disabilities

Special considerations are needed when addressing bullying in youth with disabilities. There are resources to help kids with disabilities who are bullied or who bully others. Youth with disabilities often have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans that can be useful in crafting specialized approaches for preventing and responding to bullying. These plans can provide additional services that may be necessary. Additionally, [civil rights laws](#) protect students with disabilities against harassment.

### Creating a Safe Environment for Youth with Special Health Needs

Youth with special health needs—such as diabetes requiring insulin regulation, food allergies, or youth with epilepsy— may require accommodations at school. In these cases they do not require an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan. However, schools can protect students with special health needs from

bullying and related dangers. If a child with special health needs has a medical reaction, teachers should address the medical situation first before responding to the bullying. Educating kids and teachers about students' special health needs and the dangers associated with certain actions and exposures can help keep kids safe.

## Federal Civil Rights Laws and Youth with Disabilities

When bullying is directed at a child because of his or her established disability and it creates a hostile environment at school, bullying behavior may cross the line and become "disability harassment." Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the school must address the harassment. Read more about [federal civil rights laws](#).

### Additional Resources

- [Bullying and Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Health Needs Tip Sheet](#) (PDF - 340 KB)
- [Keeping Students with Disabilities Safe from Bullying](#)

## What are the federal civil rights laws ED and DOJ enforce?

A school that fails to respond appropriately to harassment of students based on a [protected](#) class may be violating one or more civil rights laws enforced by the Department of Education and the Department of Justice, including:

Title IV and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

## Chapter 6

### SNAP - Special Needs Advocacy Programs™©

#### Bullying and Special Needs Children

*Lisa Reyna Loe*

*Special Needs/SpEd Advocate*

#### **What Can Parents Do?**

- ✓ Education is key! Know your rights and know your child's rights. Review the parent/student handbook usually sent home at the beginning of the year. Don't just sign off on it. If you don't have a handbook, every school district has their **Parent/Student Handbook** online, as well as the **Employee Handbook**(and **Code of Conduct** if applicable). Personally, I prefer hardcopies to make notes in the margins.
- ✓ Research your school district's rules and by-laws found in the Handbooks and/or Code of Conduct. If your child is being bullied, be sure to review the "Bullying" section, especially the appropriate consequences for bullying acts.
- ✓ **Document! Document! Document!** Ask that all correspondence be sent through email so that you have back and forth documentation. Should teachers and/or administrative staff contact you via phone, follow up conversations with emails beginning with, "per our earlier phone call today..."
- ✓ Be as pleasant as possible. First and foremost, establish a good rapport with school staff. The goal is to make school easier for your child, and as our parents told us, you'll catch more bees with honey.
- ✓ Review Texas HB (House Bill) 1942, also known as the "bully bill." This bill allows for the bully to be moved to another class or even another school rather than the victim. If your child's been experiencing long-term bullying, make sure the school district is abiding by the bully bill.
- ✓ Review Texas SB (Senate Bill) 507 regarding cameras in special education classrooms and read the fine print. These cameras are not automatic. They're only installed if a parent, school board member, or staff member requests that audio/video equipment be installed. School districts may accept donations and grant money to purchase the equipment. (FAQ link: [www.teachthevote.org](http://www.teachthevote.org).)
- ✓ As difficult as the movie is to watch, rent a copy of the documentary, BULLY. My son was horribly bullied and I thought I knew about all the incidents. BULLY showed me that what I thought I knew was only the tip of the iceberg. BULLY's minute-to-minute, hour-to-hour, day-to-day torment of real life bullied children is shocking!

#### ***ARD meetings and IEPs***

- ✓ Again, educate yourself with A Guide To The ARD Process which, by law, should be given to every parent of a special-needs child.
- ✓ Ask for the IDEA handbook. If the school cannot provide it, ask an advocate or TEA to send you a handbook. As a last resort, buy it online. The IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) handbook is an invaluable tool!



- ✓ Invite a professional special education advocate. There are several nonprofit organizations that provide advocacy for free (Advocacy, Inc. in TX). This is your right. I invited an advocate to an ARD, and the school district cancelled the meeting making me feel as if I'd done something wrong. I didn't. In fact, you don't even have to tell the ARD Committee that you're bringing an advocate. Again, this is your right!
- ✓ You have the right to record any and all meetings, ARDs or otherwise. This gets tricky with schools due to privacy concerns of other minor children that may be mentioned during the meeting. Because of this, in my opinion, you should let school officials know you're recording the meeting...after everyone sits down for the meeting. Advance notice isn't necessary. Should the school cancel any meeting because you're recording, file a civil rights complaint. Texas is a one-party consent state. Under Texas law, it's a crime to record any wire, oral or electronic communication without the consent of at least one party. The good news is that YOU count as one party.
- ✓ Make sure each and every IEP is NOT a carbon copy of the previous IEP. You'd be surprised how often this happens. IEPs are legally binding documents - make sure the ARD Committee, faculty and school administration are adhering to every goal set forth on the IEP!
- ✓ DO NOT SIGN OFF ON AN IEP AT THE END OF AN ARD MEETING. Only sign "agree" on the final IEP. I mentioned my son's bullying at each and every ARD meeting from 2006-2010, yet my comments never made it onto the final IEP. Trust me, you will be pressured to sign "agree" at the end of an ARD meeting. DON'T! It is absolutely your right to withhold your signature until the final, typed IEP is completed with EVERYONE's input including the parents (and child, if applicable).

### ***Safeguards for your special needs child***

- ✓ Establish a buddy system for your child, especially if your child is nonverbal. The first incidents I learned of didn't come from my son or faculty. Our neighbor's son was in my son's class and after a few weeks, he told his mother what was going on, and she told me. I can't stress the importance of a buddy system. Perhaps a neighbor, or a friend from church, that goes to the same school as your child. Make sure you have a relationship with the buddy's parents. In many instances, this is a lifeline.
- ✓ Make sure your child, and his/her teacher, know the difference between tattling and reporting. This is crucial.
- ✓ Schedule frequent 1x1 meetings with your child's teacher, especially if your child is being bullied.
- ✓ Keep track of your child's DAILY work and grades. My son's daily grades plummeted, yet his report card always reflected passing grades. My gut feeling is that this happens due to the No Child Left Behind law. Good statistics are extremely important for increasing yearly school district budgets.

### ***Mainstreaming***

- ✓ Good ideas on paper only – not realistic as most mainstream teachers aren't certified in Special Education.
- ✓ Teachers are underpaid, overworked, and have too many kids in their classes. Dropping an autistic child into mix only adds to teacher frustration. It's easier to punish a child for

behaviors he/she can't control, than it is to investigate why the child's upset in the first place.

- ✓ Attend school board meetings and elections. Vote for yearly continuing education budgeting for ALL teachers to include current Special Education certifications.
- ✓

### ***Symptoms for bullied special needs children including nonverbal and ASD***

- ✓ Unexplained bruising, red marks, limping.
- ✓ Excessive sweating.
- ✓ Flinches at anyone touching them.
- ✓ Begging to stay home (School Avoidance, a psychiatric disorder).
- ✓ Additional tics/behaviors. My child began shredding his clothes with his bare hands. Another child I know began pulling out her hair, eye lashes and eye brows.
- ✓ Verbal AND nonverbal self-harm – violent rocking, banging head on hard surfaces, loud non-specific noise (howling, moaning, etc.), inconsolable crying, any behavior out of the ordinary.
- ✓ Weight loss.
- ✓ Failing daily grades.
- ✓ Increased OCD/ADHD behaviors.
- ✓ Anxiety.
- ✓ Depression.
- ✓ Low frustration level leading to frequent meltdowns.

### ***Acronyms, Definitions & Web Sites***

- ✓ ARD – Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process
- ✓ Advocate – Individual who is not an attorney, but assists parents and children in their dealing with school districts regarding SpEd programs
- ✓ Due Process – This includes the elements of notice, opportunity to be heard, and to defend ones' self with regard to the IDEA
- ✓ FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
- ✓ FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education, provision as required under IDEA
- ✓ IEP – Individual Education Plan
- ✓ IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea>)
- ✓ LRE – Least Restrictive Environment, requirement of IDEA
- ✓ OSEP – U.S. Office of Special Education Programs
- ✓ OSERS – U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
- ✓ Section 504 – Provision of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which prohibits recipients of federal funds from discrimination against persons with disabilities
- ✓ TEA – Texas Education Agency
- ✓ Walk A Mile In Their Shoes – AbilityPath report on bullying and the special needs child, [www.walk-a-mile-in-their-shoes.pdf](http://www.walk-a-mile-in-their-shoes.pdf)

### ***Social Media:***

- Lisa Reyna Loe (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram)
- @LisaLoe (Twitter)
- ImBullyFree.org501c3 (fb)
- @ImBullyFree (tw)

- Stop Bullying at Leander ISD (fb)

***Resource Links:***

- @StopBullying.Gov (tw)
- StopBullying.Gov (fb)
- [www.imbullyfree.org](http://www.imbullyfree.org)
- [www.StopBullying.gov](http://www.StopBullying.gov)
- [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us) (TEA)
- [www.ocers.org](http://www.ocers.org)
- [www.disabilityrights.org/glossary.htm](http://www.disabilityrights.org/glossary.htm)
- [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)
- <https://sites.ed.gov/idea>
- <https://sites.ed.gov/osers>
- <https://sites.ed.gov/osep>

## Chapter 7

### Bullying Facts from the CDC

[https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying_factsheet.pdf)

## Understanding Bullying

### Fact Sheet

Bullying is a form of youth violence. CDC defines bullying as any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.

#### **Bullying can include:**

- aggression that is physical (hitting, tripping)
- verbal (name calling, teasing)
- Relational/ social (spreading rumors, leaving out of group).
- Cyber bullying

A young person can be a perpetrator, a victim, or both (also known as “bully/victim”).

Bullying can also occur through technology and is called electronic aggression or cyber-bullying. Electronic aggression is bullying that occurs through e-mail, a chat room, instant messaging, a website, text messaging, or videos or pictures posted on websites or sent through cell phones.

#### **Why is bullying a public health problem?**

Bullying is widespread in the United States.

- In a 2015 nationwide survey, 20% of high school students reported being bullied on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey.
- An estimated 16% of high school students reported in 2015 that they were bullied electronically in the 12 months before the survey.

#### **How does bullying affect health?**

Bullying can result in physical injury, social and emotional distress, and even death. Victimized youth are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, and poor school adjustment. Youth who bully others are at increased risk for substance use, academic problems, and violence later in adolescence and adulthood. Compared to youth who only bully, or who are only victims, bully-victims suffer the most serious consequences and are at greater risk for both mental health and behavior problems.

### **Who is at risk for bullying?**

Different factors can increase a youth's risk of engaging in or experiencing bullying.<sup>6</sup> However, the presence of these factors does not always mean that a young person will bully others or be bullied. Some of the factors associated with a higher likelihood of engaging in bullying behavior include:

- Externalizing problems, such as defiant and disruptive behavior
- Harsh parenting by caregivers
- Attitudes accepting of violence. Some of the factors associated with a higher likelihood of victimization include:
  - Poor peer relationships
  - Low self-esteem
  - Perceived by peers as different or quiet

### **Understanding Bullying**

#### **How can we prevent bullying?**

The ultimate goal is to stop bullying before it starts. Research on preventing and addressing bullying is still developing. School-based bullying prevention programs are widely implemented, but infrequently evaluated. Based on a review of the limited research on school based bullying prevention, the following program elements are promising:

- Improving supervision of students
- Using school rules and behavior management techniques in the classroom and throughout the school to detect and address bullying by providing consequences for bullying
- Having a whole school anti-bullying policy, and enforcing that policy consistently
- Promoting cooperation among different professionals and between school staff and parents

#### **How does CDC approach bullying prevention?**

CDC uses a four-step approach to address public health problems like bullying.

**Step 1:** Define and monitor the problem. Before we can prevent bullying, we need to know how big the problem is, where it is, and who it affects. CDC learns about a problem by gathering and studying data. These data are critical because they help us know where prevention is most needed.

**Step 2:** Identify risk and protective factors. It is not enough to know that bullying is affecting a certain group of people in a certain area. We also need to know why. CDC conducts and supports research to answer this question. We can then develop programs to reduce or get rid of risk factors and increase protective factors.

Step 3: Develop and test prevention strategies Using information gathered in research, CDC develops and tests strategies to prevent bullying.

Step 4: Ensure widespread adoption in this final step, CDC shares the best prevention strategies. CDC may also provide funding or technical help so communities can adopt these strategies.

Where can I learn more?

#### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/>

#### **VetoViolence**

<https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/>

#### **Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention**

[www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

#### **Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44294/>

There is a strong link between bullying and suicide, as suggested by recent bullying-related suicides in the US and other countries. Parents, teachers, and students learn the dangers of bullying and help students who may be at risk of committing suicide

In recent years, a series of bullying-related suicides in the US and across the globe have drawn attention to the connection between bullying and suicide. Though too many adults still see bullying as “just part of being a kid,” it is a serious problem that leads to many negative effects for victims, including suicide. Many people may not realize that there is also a link between being bullied and committing suicide.

#### **The statistics on bullying and suicide are alarming:**

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people, resulting in about 4,400 deaths per year, according to the CDC. For every suicide among young people, there are at least 100 suicide attempts. Over 14 percent of high school students have considered suicide, and almost 7 percent have attempted it.
- Bully victims are between 2 to 9 times more likely to consider suicide than non-victims, according to studies by Yale University
- A study in Britain found that at least half of suicides among young people are related to bullying
- 10 to 14 year old girls may be at even higher risk for suicide, according to the study above
- According to statistics reported by ABC News, nearly 30 percent of students are either bullies or victims of bullying, and 160,000 kids stay home from school every day because of fear of bullying

## **Conclusion**

Imbullyfree.org will be there for your family for as long as it takes. We have a core of experts that understand the anti bully processes. When we are advocating for your child, all of our team mates are contacted if their expertise is required. The parents are the best advocates for your child. We are giving you the tools and education to help stop the harassment and bullying that is having a negative impact on your family.