

FOCUS | SOCIAL ISSUES

BULLYING

The schoolyard bully has been a social fixture for generations. But the recent death of a 13-year-old Moreno Valley boy who was assaulted at school has the local community saying that bullying in schools must stop. Here's a statistical look at bullying in the U.S. and how lawmakers in each state address the issue.

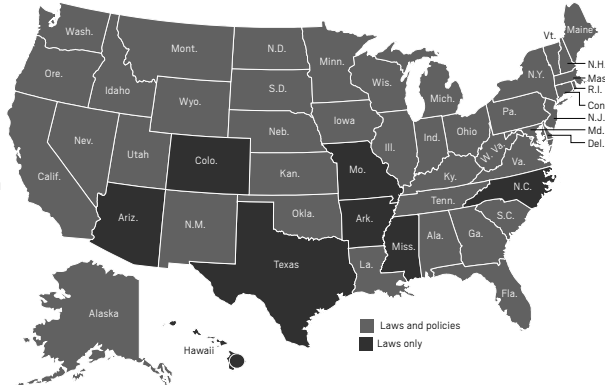
Compiled by JEFF GOERTZEN | Southern California News Group

WHAT IS BULLYING?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines bullying as any unwanted aggressive behavior 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 damage.

LAWS AND POLICIES

State and local lawmakers throughout the U.S. have taken action to prevent bullying and protect children. While each jurisdiction or state addresses bullying differently, most action requires districts and schools to implement a bullying policy and procedures to investigate and respond when it occurs. Some states also require bullying prevention programs, inclusion of bullying prevention in health education standards and/or teacher professional development. While these laws generally do not prescribe specific consequences for kids who engage in bullying behavior, and very few classify bullying as a criminal offense, the states may address bullying, cyberbullying and related behaviors in a single law or across multiple laws. In some cases, bullying appears in state criminal codes that may apply to juveniles.



BULLYING BY THE NUMBERS

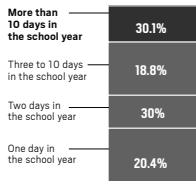
1 IN 5

STUDENTS AGES 12-18 REPORTED BEING BULLIED



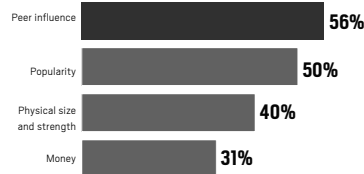
Frequency of bullying

Among students ages 12-18 who reported being bullied at school.



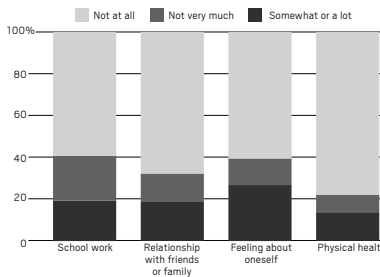
Types of power imbalance in bullying

Peer influence is the most frequently reported type of perceived power imbalance. More than half of students bullied reported those who bullied them had the ability to influence what other students thought of them.



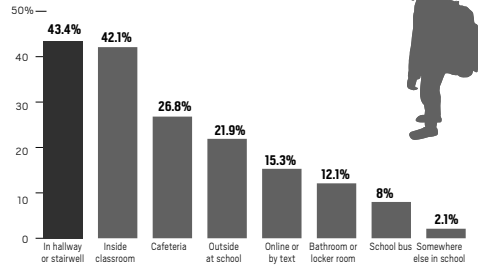
Aspect of life affected

Students ages 12-18 who reported being bullied at school said they were affected in these areas.



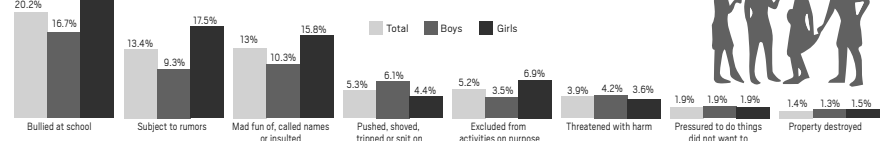
By location

Where students 12-18 reported being bullied.



Bullying methods

By type among boys and girls ages 12-18.



BULLIES OF THE BIG SCREEN



1930s: In the short film series "Our Gang," the bully Butch is played by Thomas Ross Bond.

1990: In the movie "My Bodyguard," Matt Dillon plays high school bully Melvin Moody.

1983: Scut Farkus is the bully in "The Christmas Story," played by Zack Ward.

1984: In "The Karate Kid," bully Johnny Lawrence is played by William Zabka.

1985: Bully Biff Tannen is played by Thomas F. Wilson in "Back to the Future."

1999: Reese Witherspoon is the ruthless high school student Tracy Flick in "Election."

2004: "Mean Girls" illustrates the awful things girls can do to each other without violence.

2009: Stan, played by Hunter Parrish, is the aggressive boyfriend in "17 Again."

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Institute for Research