

SPIN NEWS

The Newsletter for Parents of Children with Special Needs

SPECIAL
PARENT
INFORMATION
NETWORK

2023-24 School Year Special Edition

SPIN is co-sponsored by the Disability & Communication Access Board and the Department of Education. Services include a phone line for information referral and support, a quarterly newsletter, an annual conference and community workshops. SPIN is guided by an Advisory Committee made up of parents, teachers and people with disabilities.

SPIN

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Together We Can Reduce Bullying

In this Special Edition of the SPIN News, we are revisiting the issue of bullying. October is National Bullying Prevention Month, so it's a good time to ask ourselves: What are the best practices for preventing bullying in schools? Here are some of the elements of an evidence-based approach to bullying prevention:

CREATING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

The vast majority of parents, teachers and administrators believe that students should feel comfortable socially, emotionally and academically while at school. **Social-emotional learning (SEL)** creates an overall culture of respect and empathy. Research has confirmed that SEL is linked to more positive attitudes about oneself and others and reduces the incidence of bullying and aggressive behavior.

School-wide **positive behavior supports** help set an expectation of respectful behavior toward others as well as additional instruction and support to develop positive behavior skills, including for those at the greatest risk of being involved in bullying. **Mental health services** also contribute to a positive school climate by addressing student anxiety, depression, impulsiveness and other conditions that interfere with

a student's learning and relationships with others.

INTERVENING EARLY WHEN BULLYING OCCURS

When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior, they send the message that it is not acceptable. Interventions should be flexible and tailored to each incidence of bullying. Ideally they include the option for restorative justice where the focus is on mediation and having the bully accept responsibility for harm. By contrast, zero tolerance policies

emphasize punishment and have little effect on preventing bullying in the future.

INVOLVING ALL IN THE SOLUTION

Bullying is a complex issue that has been part of all human existence. To create a positive climate that effectively reduces the incidence of bullying at all public schools will require each of us to take a part: parents, students, teachers and administrators. Partnering between the home, the school and the community is the key to success.



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Stop Bullying: What Kids Can Do

The "Stop - Walk - Talk" Strategy

Stop, Walk & Talk is a simple tool that can be used by victims of bullying, as well as bystanders who witness bullying. It empowers children and youth to tell the bully to stop, that what they are doing is not ok, encourages them to walk away from the bully and to talk with a trusted adult about the incident. Practice with your child at home so they will be ready to stop, walk and talk.



STOP

- Memorize a simple statement, also called a "Bully Ban", to tell the bully what they are doing is not ok:

"Stop that"

"Cut it out"

"Dude, that's not cool"

"Hey, that's over the line"

"Whatever"

- Help kids brainstorm their own statement and practice saying it in a calm, confident voice.

WALK

- Walk away from the bully and crowd of bystanders.
- Walk to the nearest classroom, teacher or to the office.

PREVENTION

- To prevent being singled out by a bully, walk with friends to class or to the playground.
- Ask a trusted adult to shadow you or walk with you.
- Avoid being alone in places where the bullying happens.

TALK

- Talk with a trusted adult about what happened. This can be a parent or family member, teacher, aide or principal.
- Use the HIOE "Speak Now" app, available for free for Apple and android devices. Students in elementary, middle and high school can report an incident and even remain anonymous.
- Talk with a counselor if the bullying makes you feel sad, scared or worried.

Don't be a Bystander, be an Upstander

A bystander is someone who sees bullying in action, stands by and watches and does nothing about it.

An upstander can do things to support the person being bullied before, during and after an incident has happened.

BEFORE

- Walk with kids who are targeted so they are not alone.
- Invite them to sit with you and include them in activities.
- Don't repeat gossip or share harmful social media posts.

DURING

- Don't laugh or encourage the bully in any way.
- Don't become part of the audience watching the bully.
- Tell the bully to stop.
- Find an adult who can help.

AFTER

- Report bullying to an adult or use the HIOE "Speak Now" app.
- Show empathy and kindness to the person who was bullied and tell them you care, and they are not alone.

SOURCES: www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/passive-aggressive-diaries/201801/8-things-kids-can-say-and-do-stop-bullying
www.pbis.org/topics/bullying-prevention
www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ParentsAndStudents/AntiBullyingWork/Pages/home.aspx
www.stompoutbullying.org/bullying-bystanders-become-upstanders

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If Your Child Has Been Bullied, Your IEP Team Can Help

In Hawaii, "Bullying" is described as any written, verbal, graphic, or physical act that hurts, harms, humiliates or intimidates a student, that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment. If you feel your child has been a victim of bullying at school, talk with your child's IEP team to help your keiki recover from the bullying and to learn advocacy skills to help prepare for and prevent future incidents.



If your child has been bullied at school

- **Document the incident. Talk with your child and get as many details as possible.**
- **Contact the school to let them know your child has been bullied.**
- **If there has been an impact on their learning, request an IEP meeting to address your child's needs.**



Common impacts to a child's learning after bullying

- Reluctance or refusal to go to school
- Changes in mood, increased anxiety, depression and negative behaviors
- Avoidance of certain areas at school
- Changes in academics & school work
- Skipping services provided by the IEP
- Changes in eating, sleeping or routines
- Recurring tummy aches, headaches or other health issues that cause absence.

IEP Goals, Services & Supports



Request an assessment

to understand any changes to your child's mental health and emotional well-being.



Build social skills

to understand social cues and learn what bullying is and is not.



Develop self-advocacy skills

to learn appropriate responses to bullying like how to say "stop", how to walk away and how to tell an adult. This can also include safe spaces the child can go to for help and support.



Develop positive friendships

and encourage the buddy system when walking around campus and on the playground.



Supervision or shadowing

of the student in places where bullying may occur.



Counseling for the student

or informal check-ins by trusted adults at the school. Parents can also request counseling so they can better understand the needs of their child.

Sources: understood.org/en/articles/bullying-laws
disabilityrightstexas.org/publications/bullying-and-harassment-of-students-with-disabilities
prntexas.org/addressing-bullying-with-a-childs-iep/
<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/idea/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/bullyingdcl-8-20-13.pdf>

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Cyberbullying in Schools: What Parents Need to Know



What is Cyberbullying?

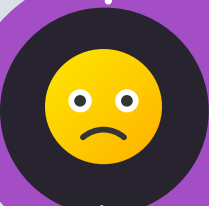
Bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers and tablets by one student towards another student or school staff, that hurts, harms, humiliates or intimidates, and is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive, that creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment. It can happen on the school campus, on a school bus or a school event on or off campus, and can use a non-DOE network, if the conduct impacts the educational environment.



What does cyberbullying look like?

Harmful messages and posts are done deliberately and repeatedly and can include:

- Posting or sending messages that threaten or intimidate others.
- Spreading hurtful rumors online.
- Sharing someone's personal information without their permission.
- Posting embarrassing or insulting photos of someone else without their permission.



What are the signs of cyberbullying?

- Being upset during or after being online
- Avoiding school or group gatherings
- Changes in mood, behavior, sleep or appetite
- Suddenly wanting to stop using technology
- Being nervous or jumpy when getting a message, text or email
- Slipping grades or focus at school
- Withdrawal from friends and family



If cyberbullying impacts your child's education:

- Keep a record of the incidence, capture screenshots if possible.
- Notify the school in writing of the incident.
- You may need to call an IEP meeting if the incident has impacted their learning.
- Offer comfort and support to your child.
- Let your child know it's not their fault.
- Encourage your child to block the bully instead of responding.
- Take a short break from technology.

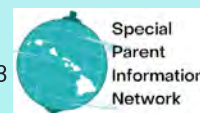


How to keep your kids safe online:

- Create a Family Media Agreement with your kids that you are willing to follow and enforce.
- Know what sites your child uses. Have copies of usernames and passwords and check in on them from time to time.
- Discuss what can be posted and shared online, and what should not.
- Check or update privacy settings.
- Ask them to talk to you if they are concerned about cyberbullying.

Sources: <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ParentsAndStudents/AntiBullyingWork/Pages/home.aspx>
<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/cyberbullying.html>
https://www.common SenseMedia.org/sites/default/files/featured-content/files/common_sense_family_media_
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/pre-teens/behaviour/bullying/about-cyberbullying-agreement.pdf>

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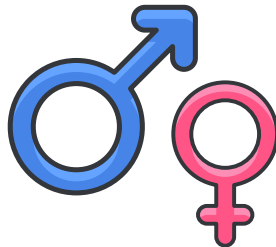
Protecting Teens from Themselves: Self-Cyberbullying

Self-cyberbullying (also known as digital self-harm) is a relatively new form of online self-abuse. It happens when teens anonymously post mean and hurtful comments about themselves.

Here's what we know about self-cyberbullies:



They make up **6%** of students between **12 - 17**.

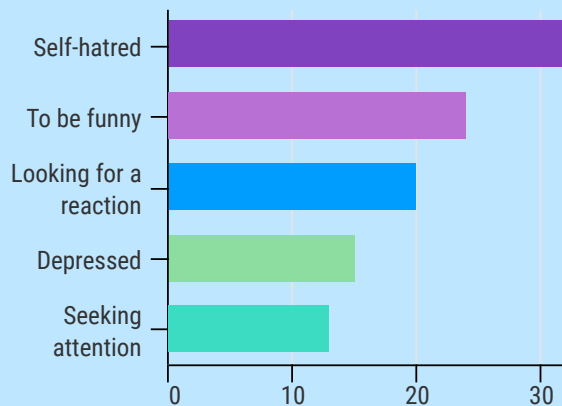


More males than females become self-cyberbullies.



They choose social media that allow anonymous messaging.

What are the top motivators for digital self-harm?



Contributing factors can include sexual orientation, substance abuse and prior bullying.

What can parents and other adults do to help?



Monitor your teen's use of social media. Encourage your teen to talk to you about problems & feelings.



If you suspect your teen is being cyber-bullied, ask for help in detecting the source.



If necessary, seek out professional therapy. The following therapies can be helpful in treating self-harm:



Cognitive behavioral therapy, and



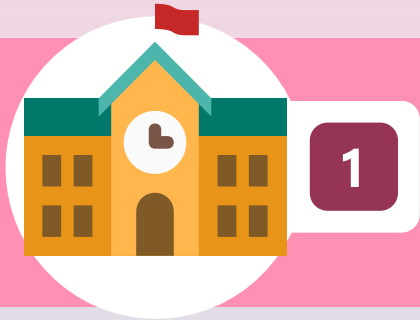
Dialectical behavior therapy.

SOURCE: **Digital Harm Among Adolescents**, Patchin, J and Hinduja, S, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 61 (2017), pgs. 761-766. - <https://tinyurl.com/5t3xvpk7>

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Support for Maui Families & Children with Disabilities



Getting Support for Your Child

Do you have questions about in-person or distance learning options, or need help accessing services? Call the DOE Hotline: 808-727-6880



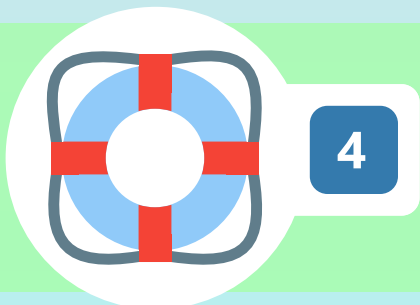
IEP Concerns & Support

If you have questions or concerns about your child's IEP, call the DOE Hotline 808-727-6880 or LDAH 808-536-9684 for support.



Parent Resources & Information

If you are not sure where to start or who to call, you can call SPIN at 808-586-8126.



Links to Emergency Support

FEMA: 800-621-FEMA (3362)

Local supports outside of FEMA, call Aloha United Way at 2-1-1

The Special Parent Information Network (SPIN) provides information and resources to families who have a child with a disability, ages birth to 22. Visit our websites at www.spinhawaii.org and www.spinconference.org.

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