

Bullying Awareness and Prevention: Information for Parents and Caregivers

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Introductions



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Learning Objectives

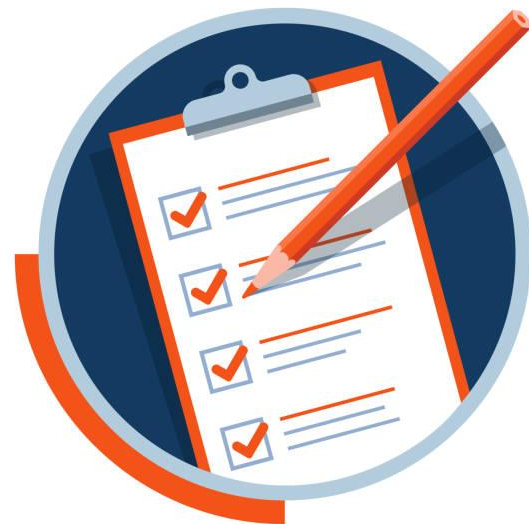
Participants will:

- Understand key information about bullying to help prevent and effectively respond to bullying.
- Understand special considerations related to bullying for students with disabilities.



Overview

- Wisconsin bullying statistics and trends
- Bullying definition and types of bullying
- Risk factors and effects of bullying
- What can school do (and what must they do by law)
- What can parents do?
- Bullying and students with disabilities
- Resources

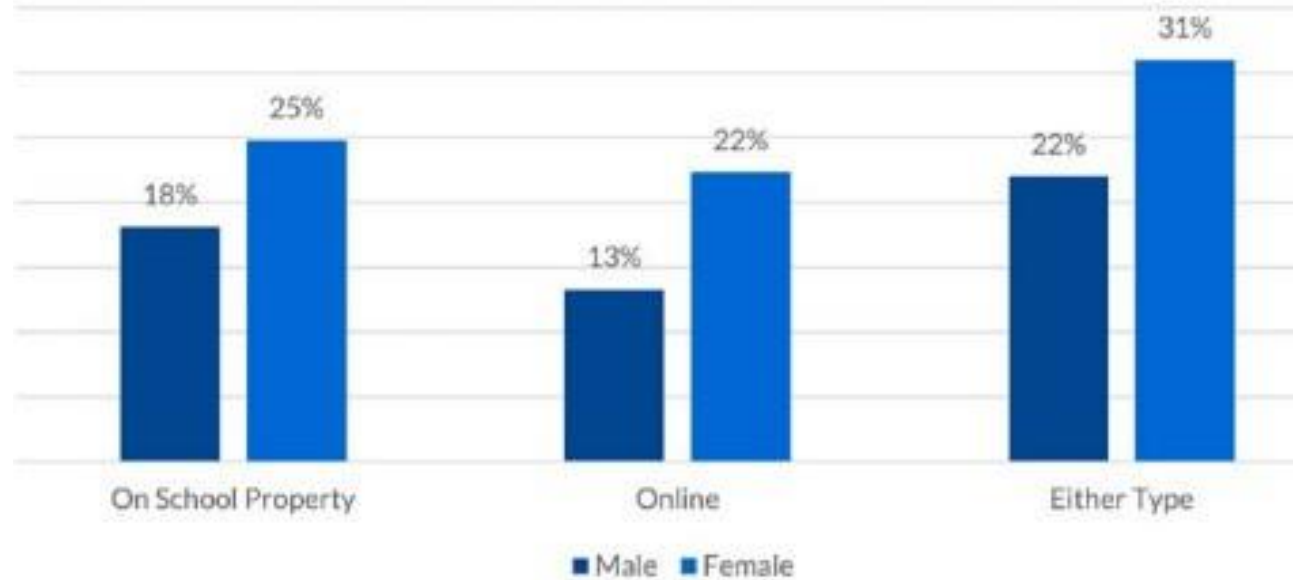


2023 Wisconsin YRBS

21.6% of students reported being bullied on school property

17.8% of students reported being bullied electronically

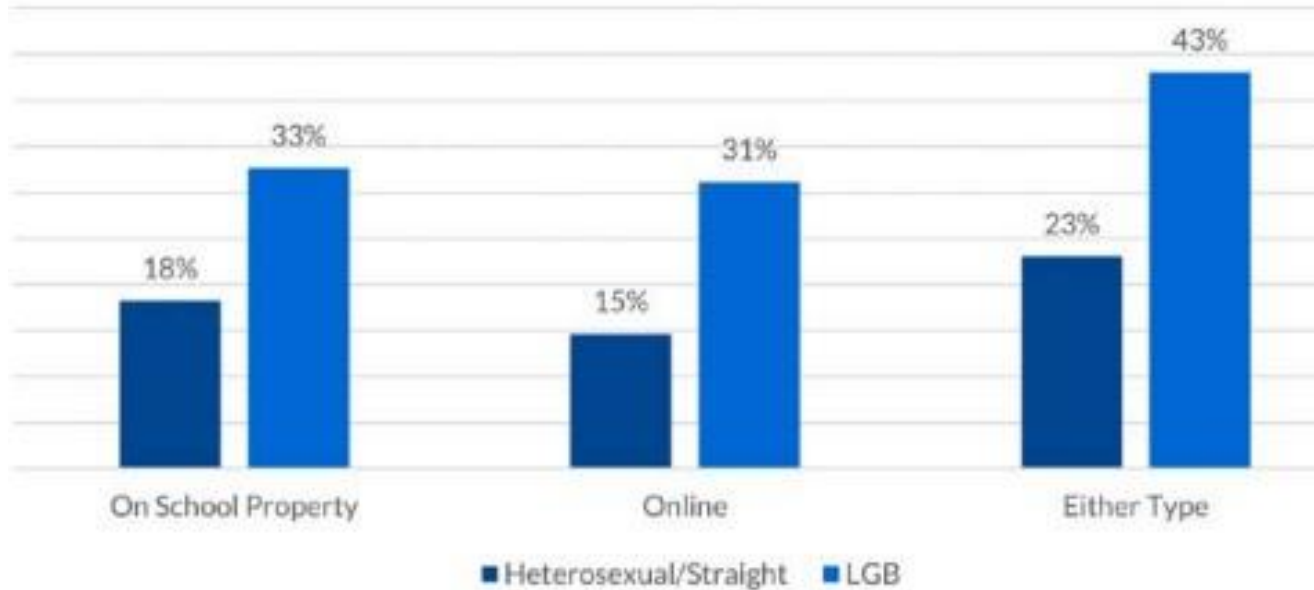
Experiences of Different Types of Bullying By Sex



Source: 2023 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

2023 Wisconsin YRBS

Experiences of Different Types of Bullying By Sexual Orientation



Source: 2023 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

Bullying Defined

The Centers for Disease Control 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”



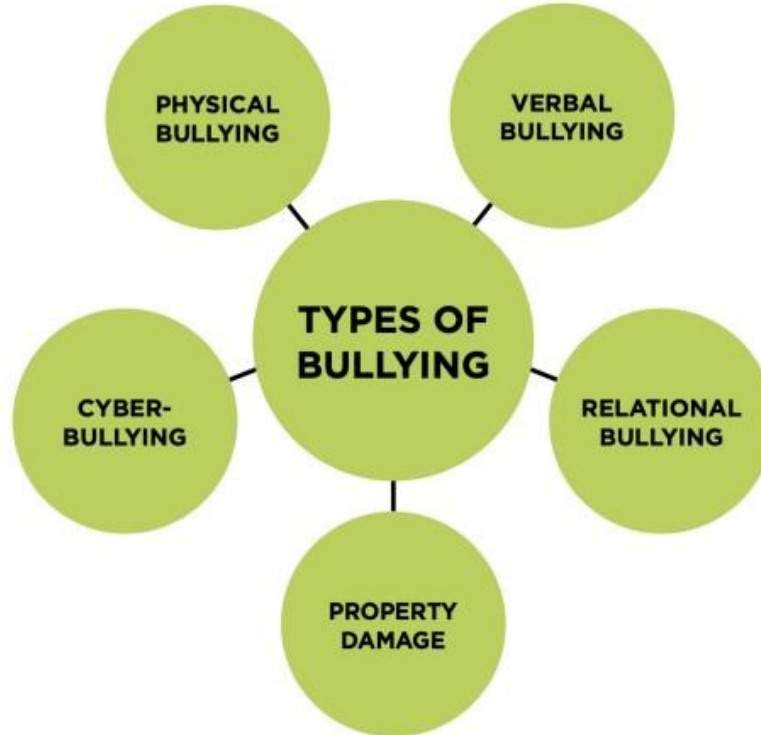
Bullying Defined

Three consistent components of bullying:

- Imbalance of power
- Repeated
- Intent to cause physical or emotional harm



Types of Bullying



Risk Factors

There are several risk factors that can make an individual vulnerable to bullying victimization.

These can include identity-related factors such as:

- Race, ethnicity, and national origin
- Socioeconomic status
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Disability status
- Physical attributes such as obesity
- Intersectionality of many identities

They can also include other risk factors such as:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Social isolation
- Academic skill deficits
- Communication deficits
- Social skill deficits

Negative Effects of Experiencing Bullying

Kids who are bullied can experience negative physical, social, emotional, academic, and mental health issues. Kids who are bullied are more likely to experience:

- Increased absences and higher dropout rates
- Decreased academic performance (lower grades and standardized test scores)
- Changes in sleep or eating habits
- Health complaints
- Lowered self-esteem
- Increased feelings of sadness and loneliness
- Anxiety
- Depression
- PTSD
- Increased risk of suicide-related behaviors

Negative Effects of Bullying Others

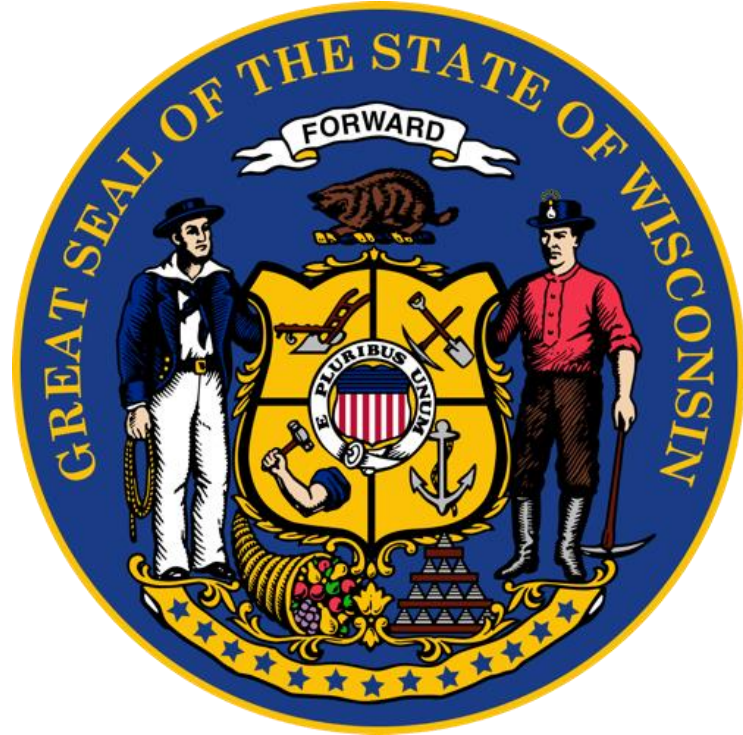
Kids who bully others can also engage in violent and other risky behaviors into adulthood. Kids who bully are more likely to:

- **Abuse alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults**
- **Get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school**
- **Engage in early sexual activity**
- **Have criminal convictions and traffic citations as adults**
- **Be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults**

Wisconsin State Statute

In Wisconsin, the state statute that addresses bullying (118.46) enforces two requirements of public school districts:

1. Develop a school policy on bullying
2. Distribute the policy to students, parents, and guardians annually, as well as to any person who requests a copy

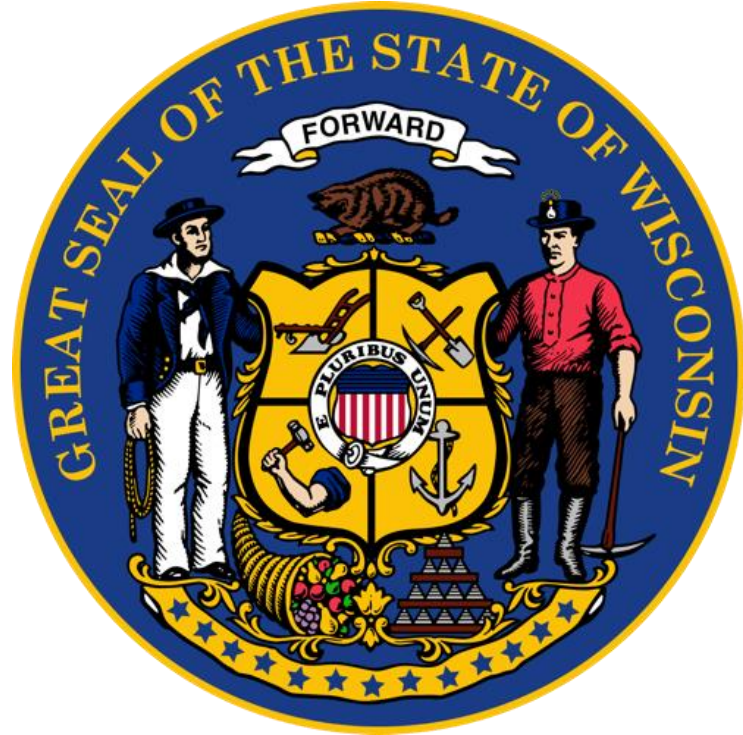


State and school district requirements in Wisconsin State Statute 118.46 Policy on Bullying

Wisconsin State Statute

The state statute does not:

- Require districts to respond in a particular manner
- Require districts to implement bullying prevention curriculum or activities
- Provide authority to DPI to monitor or intervene on bullying reports and concerns
- Provide for a state-level complaint process
- Mention cyberbullying



State and school district requirements in Wisconsin State Statute 118.46 Policy on Bullying

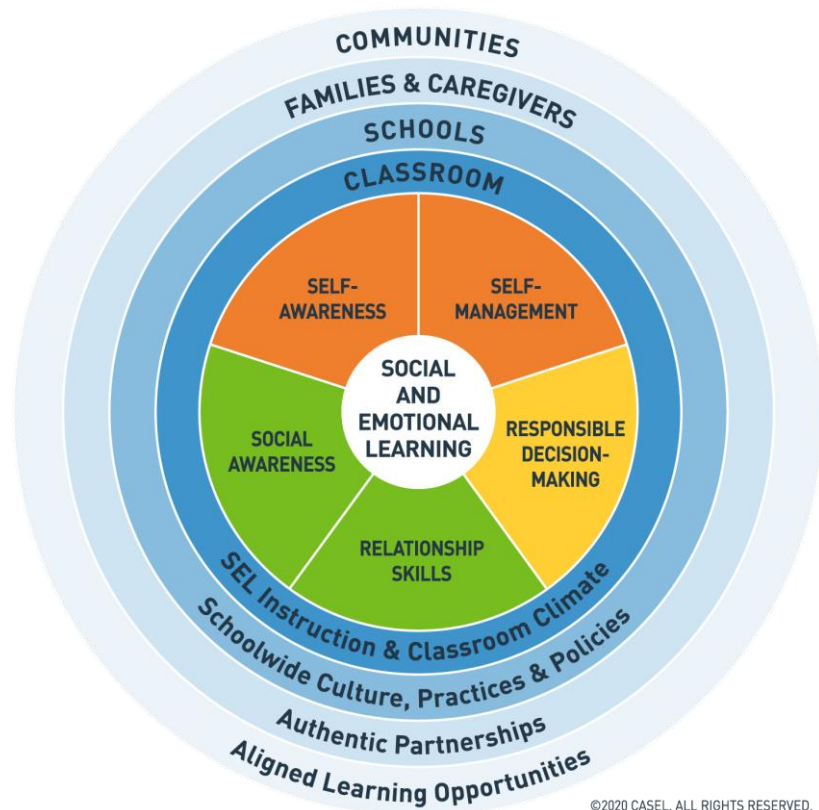
Pupil Nondiscrimination Statute

If a student is being bullied due to their membership in a protected class (including race, sexual orientation, disability), they may have recourse to file a state-level complaint under Wisconsin's pupil nondiscrimination laws.

[DPI Pupil Nondiscrimination webpage](#)

What Can Schools Do? Bullying Prevention

- Establish a comprehensive anti-bullying policy and a bullying prevention task force
- Teach students, caregivers, and educators about bullying and cyberbullying
- Teach students social emotional learning
- Provide more targeted supports (such as social skills supports) for students in need



What Can Schools Do? Bullying Response



Have clear procedures for...

- Students and parents to report bullying
- Investigating bullying incidents
- Follow-up after a bullying incident for both the student who bullied and the student who was bullied

What Can You Do if Your Child is Being Bullied?

- Watch for [warning signs](#) that your child may be bullied or may be bullying others.
- Reach out to the school to ask for help. Connect with a teacher, school psychologist, counselor, or social worker. Follow the chain of command (principal, superintendent, school board) if your concerns are not being addressed.
- Ask the school to develop a plan, with you, to provide an outline of how future incidents may be avoided or handled.




Talking to Your Child About Bullying



- **Talk about healthy coping skills and safety protocols.**
- **Help your child identify supportive adults at school.**
- **Affirm your child for sharing their feelings or asking for help.**
- **Do not dismiss your child or their feelings or make statements such as, “Bullying is part of growing up. It happens to everyone.”**
- **Empower your child with confidence.**
- **Ask your child how you can support them the best and if necessary, how you can intervene.**

What to Avoid As A Parent

- **Blaming your child or minimizing their experiences**
 - **Encouraging your child to retaliate physically**
 - **Confronting the parents or family of the student who is bullying**
 - **Asking for specifics about other students involved; schools are bound by state and federal law and cannot legally share that information**
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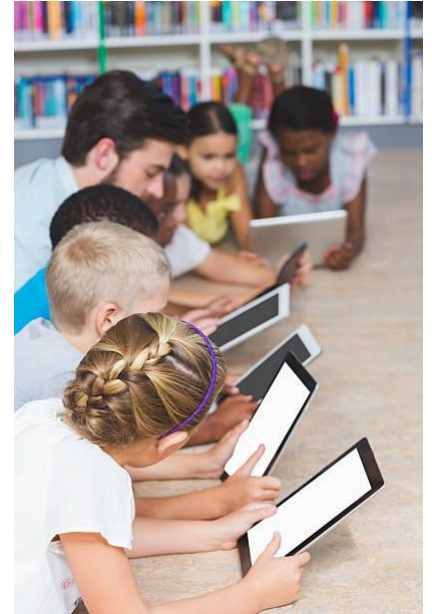
Bullying and Students with Disabilities

- **Students with disabilities are more likely to be affected by bullying than students without disabilities.**
- **There are factors that may increase the risk that students with disabilities will be bullied, such as physical characteristics, processing and social skills, differences in social behavior, or intolerant environments**
- **Some students with disabilities may not understand the extent to which bullying behaviors are harmful, or may be unable to make the situation known to an adult who can help.**

Autism and Bullying

Students with autism may have:

- **Difficulty Knowing when Bullying Occurs**
 - Misperceive interactions as bullying or not as bullying
 - Difficulty with perspective taking
- **Difficulty understanding ‘hidden curriculum*’ and adapting to different social situations**
 - *Set of rules or guidelines not directly taught but assumed to be known



Bullying and the IEP

- Districts have a responsibility to address bullying of students with disabilities
- Schools have an obligation to ensure that a student with a disability who is the target of bullying behavior continues to receive FAPE (free appropriate public education) in accordance with his or her IEP



[College and Career Ready IEP 5 Step Process](#)

IEP Team Meeting

As part of its appropriate response to bullying, the school should:

- Convene the IEP Team to determine if, as a result of the effects of the bullying, the student's needs have changed
- If the IEP team determines the IEP is not meeting the student's needs, the IEP Team must then decide to what extent additional or different special education or related services are needed to address the student's individual needs
- Revise the IEP accordingly
- Use caution when considering a change of placement

Bullying and School Personnel

If a parent or family member believes their child is being bullied by school personnel:

- Contact the building administrator or district administrator.
- Bring concerns to an IEP meeting.
- Engage in Mediation as one of the [Dispute Resolution Options](#).

If the problem is not resolved, parents have the option to file a complaint through educator misconduct webpage at DPI; however, not every compliant results in a formal licensing investigation.

Bullying Prevention for Students with IEPs

- Engage students in developing high-interest activities in which everyone has a role to play
- Provide general up-front information about the kinds of support children with disabilities may require, and have adults facilitate peer support.



Bullying Prevention for Students with IEPs

- Create a buddy system.



[Wide Open Spaces:
Maggie's Story](#)

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Bullying Prevention for Students with IEPs

- Involve students in adaptive strategies.
- Conduct team-based learning activities.
- Implement social-emotional learning activities.
- Acknowledge positive, helpful, inclusive behavior.



Working Together

All children are entitled to a positive, safe, and nurturing school environment.



Resources

- [DPI Comprehensive Approach to Bullying Prevention](#)
- [Stopbullying.gov](#)
- [OSERS Dear Colleague Letter](#)
 - [Effective Evidence-based Practices for Preventing and Addressing Bullying](#)
- [Good Friends, Inc.](#)
- [OCALI Bullying and Individuals with Special Needs](#)
- [PACER Center](#)
 - [National Bullying Prevention Center](#)
 - [Students with Disabilities and Bullying](#)

Questions



Contacts



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