



Anti-Bullying Facts for Parents

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength. The bullying behavior is typically repeated over time and has the potential to cause severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyber bullying; it does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, peer conflict or *isolated* acts of harassment, aggressive behavior, intimidation or meanness.

The ACPS Student Handbook/Code of Conduct defines bullying as:

“Verbal conduct (in person or through media) consisting of comments regarding the race, sexual orientation, gender, religion, physical abilities or characteristics or associates of the targeted person.”

The ACPS Student Handbook/Code of Conduct prohibits bullying by stating:

“A student, either individually or as part of a group, shall not harass, bully or cyber-bully others. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, physical intimidation, taunting, name-calling and insults and any combination of prohibited activities.”

What to do if you think your child is being bullied?

- Listen, talk to and find out what is happening to your child.
- Empathize with your child and let him/her know that bullying is wrong. Make sure your child knows that the bullying is not his or her fault.
- Do not criticize your child about how he/she handled the bullying incident. It is often very difficult for children to know how best to respond.
- Let your child know that you will work together to stop the bullying.
- Alert your child’s school administrator immediately that your child is being bullied.
- Meet with your child’s school staff to develop a plan that supports your child’s safety.
- Find out what school and community resources are available to help you and your child.
- Do not try to contact the child or the family of the child who is engaging in bullying behavior toward your child.
- If you or your child need additional help, seek help from his/her school counselor, social worker, psychologist and/or a mental health professional. ACPS is strongly committed to creating a safe and positive school environment in which the academic performance, social-emotional and physical well-being of all students is supported. The ACPS Office of Equity and Cultural Competence in conjunction with the Office of Student Services provide programs and staff that promote healthy, caring and responsible behavior among students.

When should parent’s contact school security or the police?

- If the bullying includes criminal acts such as assault, extortion, theft, serious threats or vandalism.
- If your child is threatened with a weapon.

What parents can do to protect his/her child from bullying?

- Provide your child with a positive home environment where they feel safe and loved.
- Teach your child basic bully avoidance by encouraging them to keep away from unsupervised hallways, bathrooms and areas of the playground.
- Explain to your child that there is no shame in being frightened by a bully, in walking away or in telling an adult and asking for help. Teach your child that bullying incidents can escalate and that saving their life is more important than saving face.
- Role play with your child ways to respond to bullying, such as standing tall, using a strong voice and stating things like; “Hey, stop that” or “hands off my body.”
- Encourage your child to stay calm and do not get involved in a fight. Your child could get hurt or suspended from school.
- If your child witnesses bullying or is a victim him/herself, advise him/her to report bullying incidents immediately to ACPS school staff or other trusted adults.
- Encourage your child to intervene if they witness someone else being bullied. When other students join in to protect their classmates, bullying incidents can be cut in half.