



Tips for Dealing with Bullying, Harassment and Teasing

- ❖ **Get education about bullying, harassment and teasing.** This isn't the age of the bully holding your child up for his/her lunch money anymore. It involves "cyber-bullying" (intense, online harassment using instant messaging, e-mail and obscenities and attacks in chatrooms), and a host of other social exclusion techniques. Read *Odd Girl Out* and *Best Friends, Worst Enemies*, to understand bullying behaviors with girls and boys, respectively.
- ❖ **Be aware of your own behaviors.** Do a searching inventory for things you've done or may be doing that constitute bullying, harassment or teasing. Don't feel too lousy, just work on stopping your behavior—we are models for our teenagers as well as other adults.
- ❖ **Bullying isn't just happening *between students*; it happens between adults and children. Recognize how adults close to your child might have been bullied and how they might be doing it to others.** An adult close to your child might be doing it unwittingly because it was done to them, e.g., the adult was "bullied" in graduate school, medical school, by a coach, by their parents or guardians, etc.
- ❖ **Make it clear where you stand, IN FRONT OF OTHERS.** If you stand up for yourself on issues of sexism, racism, homophobia and the like, you may get criticized or even harassed for being too "PC" or too sensitive. Decide what kind of parent or teacher you want to be and stick to your guns.
- ❖ **Intervene right away.** If you see bullying, harassing or teasing, say something specific about the behavior and then say something about your expectations. Encourage your child's teachers to take this approach.
- ❖ **Utilize the school counselor** as an anonymous means of talking about bullying and harassing at the school. Talk to other parents, as well.
- ❖ **Follow up.** Bullying and harassment is by definition, a continuing activity. One intervention is not enough.
- ❖ **Join other parents, faculty and administration at your child's school to create a culture that doesn't tolerate harassment and bullying.** Let peer pressure work to help curtail the behaviors. Inform the high school or middle school head; bullying as a school problem only stops when addressed from the top down.

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