



WHAT IS BULLYING?



Arguments and disagreements are not bullying. They are part of human relationships and they may occur when people have different opinions or want different things. Teasing or rough play is not bullying, the intention behind game playing is not to hurt or insult others. It is important that all the participants recognize and accept the activity as a game.



Bullying differs from arguing and playing because bullying is deliberate, repeated, and compared to the bully, the victim is somehow defenseless or in a weaker position. Bullying is not innocent play, one does not survive it by getting even, and it does not build character. Bullying is always a serious violation of a person's rights and degrades his/her human worth and dignity. Being bullied is a risk to the victim's well-being and future development.



Bullying can be visible or hidden by nature.

Visible forms are physical, verbal, and emotional abuse. Verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying.

Indirect bullying is a less noticeable type of bullying. It hurts the victim's social relationships and at worst leaves the victim completely isolated without any friends in the class.

« In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends »

(Martin Luther King)

BULLYING CONCERNS THE WHOLE CLASS

Bullying does not occur in a social vacuum. Usually several students are aware of what is occurring and there are several witnesses to the bully's actions. Unfortunately many of them cooperate with the bully or laugh at the bully's actions, thus conveying that they approve of the bullying. Fortunately there are some people who do take the victim's side. However, most students do not intervene in bullying situations, but remain on the outside, and by doing so silently approve of bullying.



www.kivaprogram.net



Our School is a KiVa School



KiVa program

KiVa is an evidence-based program to prevent bullying and to tackle the cases of bullying effectively, developed by the Turku University in Finland.



Actions at the school

- **At the school level** the purpose of the KiVa program is to offer school staff basic information about bullying and ways to tackle it, and to get the staff to commit to antibullying work. Break time monitors will receive highly visible vests with a KiVa logo reminding everyone of the program.
- **At class level** the purpose is to influence the students so that instead of silent acceptance or encouragement of bullies they support the victim, thus conveying that they do not condone it.
- **At student level** the purpose is to focus on tackling acute bullying cases as effectively as possible. Tackling a case always contains a follow-up discussion to ensure that the situation has changed.



Measures in individual cases of bullying

The KiVa program does not solely concentrate on preventing bullying, but also addresses individual bullying cases as effectively as possible.

Each school implementing the program has a task force **-the KiVa team-**. Their training team members are familiar with measures to address individual bullying cases. They function as experts on bullying-related matters in their school.

When a parent contacts the school with concerns about bullying or a student tells the teacher about bullying, the first step is determining if they are dealing with systematic bullying, more of an unintentional conflict, an argument between children, or a misunderstanding that has caused distress.

All cases that fulfill the criteria form bullying are shared with the KiVa team whose members will address the case and discuss it with the children involved.



Actions at home

Supporting a child who is being bullied

The knowledge or the suspicion that your child is being bullied at school can cause many kinds of emotions. Feelings such as anger, fear, shame and guilt, are natural and even expected in such a situations.

The goal of addressing the matter is to support the child, to increase his/her self-esteem, and to ensure that bullying is stopped.

No single sign indicates being bullied.

Each parent knows their child and the ways s/he expresses distress. Often the key indicator is a change compared to the student's previous behaviour, e.g. a child who used to like going to school no longer wants to go.

If there seems to be no apparent reason for the change, it is worth discussing with the child and the school staff the possibility that the child is being bullied.

