

# COVID-19 and Beyond TIPS for Parents

## Bullying and Cyberbullying Basics for Parents

### What is Bullying?

- Repeated negative, unwanted, aggressive behavior by one student or a group of students
- Students who are bullied can't to stop it by themselves – they need help often from adults
- The bully has more power (physical strength or social status) than the target
- If an incident is sufficiently traumatic – it does not need to be repeated to be considered bullying

### Cyberbullying

- Using electronic devices to hurt someone through text messages, social media, etc.
- The bully can remain anonymous and bullying can go viral
- Adults may have harder time supervising if they are not tech savvy
- During COVID19, with increased screen time, comes the possibility of increased cyberbullying
- Sexting can lead to cyberbullying and is considered a felony in Idaho

### Bystanders Can Intervene to Help Targets of Bullying

- Bystanders are students who witness bullying
- Bystanders can act as “assistants” (help the bully), “reinforces” (watch or laugh), “outsiders” (walk away), or “defenders” (intervene on behalf of the target)
- “Defenders” can interrupt the bullying situation by using humor or distraction, report the bullying to a trusted adult, and befriending the target
- If “defenders” are older, friends with the bully, or has higher status they can let students who bully know that what they did is not okay
- When bystanders act as “defenders,” they are often successful in stopping bullying, and they report increased self-esteem and sense of school belonging, as well as lower depressive and anxiety symptoms

### What Can Parents Do?

- Communicate support to your children if they experience or witness bullying
- Let your child know that the two of you can work together to stop the bullying behavior, that you will take action, and that your action will be reasonable and something your child can live with
- Discuss with your child the importance of talking to a trusted school personnel and consider informing a school personnel so that they can become involved
- Consider contacting the parents or guardians of the student engaging in the bullying behavior to inform them of their child's behavior
- Contact the police in the case of physical threats or if a crime has possibly been committed
- In the case of cyberbullying:
  - Teach kids about the importance of documentation- take a screen shot or picture of the post immediately before the student who bullied has an opportunity to remove it
  - Contact your Internet Service Provider and ask them to investigate the issue or remove the content that has been posted

This video is presented by Dr. Aida Midgett, Department of Counselor Education, Boise State University  
The partner video can be found at <https://www.boisestate.edu/radar/events-trainings-presentations/>