

Students and Bullying

According to the National Association of School Nurses position statement, [Bullying and Cyberbullying - Prevention in Schools](#) (2018), bullying has been identified by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services as a persistent public health concern with a significant impact in the school setting. Therefore, schools and public health officials seek to understand why children bully and to develop effective strategies to reduce or eliminate risk factors. According to the [North Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) (2019), nearly 43 percent of middle and 19 percent of high school students have been bullied on school property in the past 12 months. “The school nurse role includes efforts to prevent bullying and the identification of students who are bullied, bully others, or both” (NASN 2018).

As directed in [NC G.S. 115C-407.16](#), each local school administrative unit is required to adopt a policy prohibiting bullying or harassing behavior. As part of that policy, local procedures are to be developed for reporting, investigating, and implementing the consequences for these behaviors. [NC G.S. 115C-407.15](#) further defines the terms “bullying or harassing behavior.”

StopBullying.gov (2021) lists [possible signs and symptoms of bullying](#). It is important to be aware that not all children who are bullied will exhibit warning signs.

- a. Signs that a student may be experiencing bullying:
 - Unexplainable injuries
 - Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
 - Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
 - Changes in eating habits
 - Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
 - Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
 - Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
 - Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
 - Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

- b. Signs a child may be bullying others:
 - Physical or verbal fights
 - Has friends who bully others
 - Increasingly aggressive
 - Sent to the principal’s office or to detention frequently
 - Unexplained extra money or new belongings
 - Blaming others for their problems
 - Don’t accept responsibility for their actions
 - Competitive and worrying about reputation or popularity

Additional resources are available at the [NC DPI Bullying Prevention website](#) and [StopBullying.gov](#).