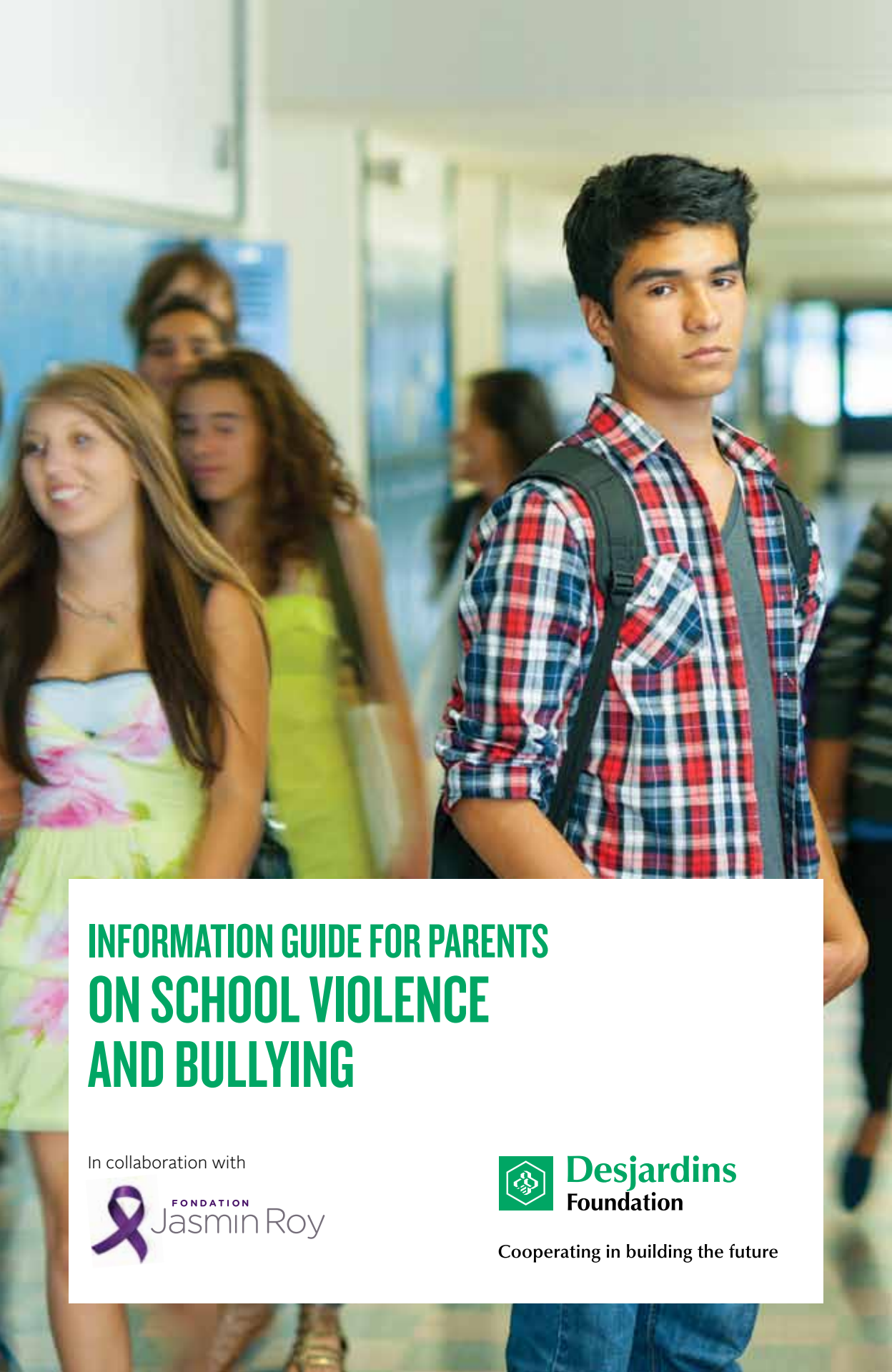


A photograph of a school hallway with several students. In the foreground, a young man with dark hair, wearing a red and blue plaid shirt and a backpack, looks back over his shoulder towards the camera. Behind him, a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a yellow dress with a pink floral pattern, is smiling and looking towards the camera. Other students are visible in the background, slightly out of focus.

INFORMATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND BULLYING

In collaboration with



Desjardins
Foundation

Cooperating in building the future



**I'M A UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL
AND I WANT PEOPLE TO LIKE ME
FOR WHO I AM, NOT FOR WHAT
OTHERS WANT ME TO BE.**

**MY DIFFERENCE MAKES ME
SPECIAL AND UNIQUE.**

MESSAGE FROM THE DESJARDINS FOUNDATION GENERAL MANAGER



The Desjardins Foundation supports young people's academic success in many different ways. We offer scholarships to encourage students to stay in school and we support engaging educational projects. We also help youth overcome obstacles—like behaviour disorders and violence—to encourage them to stay in school.

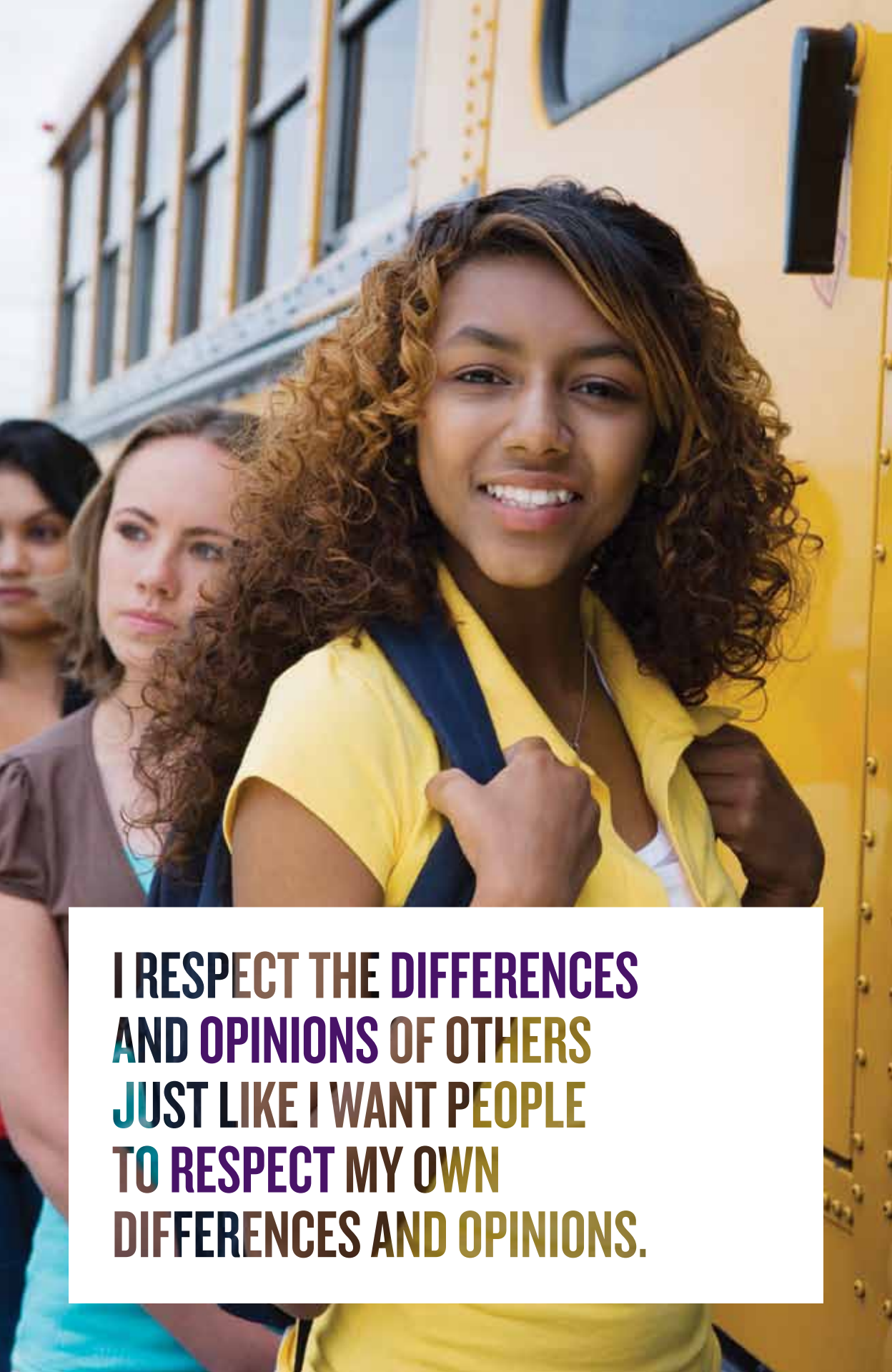
Bullying is another obstacle to our youth's academic success. School should be a place to learn and grow, not to be intimidated and brutalized. By putting a stop to bullying, we can create a more positive learning environment and teach children how to be good members of society. It's up to all of us to find ways to break the cycle of violence.

The Desjardins Foundation is pleased to provide parents with this guide in support of the Grandes Rencontres organized by Fondation Jasmin Roy. We hope it will give you information on what you can do to end bullying. With your help, we can make a real difference in the lives of young people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Derome'.

Diane Derome

General Manager
Desjardins Foundation



**I RESPECT THE DIFFERENCES
AND OPINIONS OF OTHERS
JUST LIKE I WANT PEOPLE
TO RESPECT MY OWN
DIFFERENCES AND OPINIONS.**

MESSAGE FROM THE FONDATION JASMIN ROY PRESIDENT



CREATING POSITIVE AND CARING COMMUNITIES

So that young people's dignity is respected in Quebec schools, I have made it my mission to be the spokesperson for young victims of bullying who are rarely or never heard. I've noticed that Quebecers' awareness has increased in recent years and bullying is no longer acceptable to the majority of the population. After only four years of relentless effort by Fondation Jasmin Roy, who would have thought that bullying would become a political priority? I honestly did not anticipate it. As soon as I launched my foundation, I was told that there were more urgent priorities than the problem of bullying in our society.

I am proud of our work. Our next challenge at Fondation Jasmin Roy is to encourage people to create positive and caring communities that will promote diversity, difference, mutual support and collaboration. Our goal is to implement winning strategies to raise global awareness, which will help young people understand a variety of viewpoints and develop empathy. This initiative will require the support of family, school and community resources.

In order for young people to grow and learn in safe schools, I encourage all parents to join this caring community by being positive role models for children. We are going through a major cultural shift in our society. In the past, some parents urged children to fight in the schoolyard. Those days are over. Such advice is counter-productive to school intervention and has a negative impact on the school environment. Violence and bullying are not just the concern of victims and aggressors—it's everyone's business. Therefore, if we want to support the proper socialization of children, as adults, we need to rethink our own relationship to violence and bullying. Young people watch us, emulate us and dream to be like us—so let's be good educators and five star models!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Roy'.

Jasmin Roy

President
Fondation Jasmin Roy

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INTRODUCTION

Dear parent, family member or friend,

Learning to live together and developing social skills are a part of everyday life. Stakeholders and educators involved in the education of children and adolescents should help create positive and caring communities. We need to exert a positive influence on all areas of young people's development. The bonds they create with their peers and adults allow them to be happier and to feel loved, which, in turn, helps them to realize their dreams and to develop their full potential.

Without any ill intention, you may often report conflicts and violence by categorizing them as bullying, since you are concerned about your children's well-being. To ensure the physical and psychological safety of young people, school staff must take complaints seriously and deal with them promptly. However, more often than not, they are simply conflicts, altercations or isolated incidents of violence as opposed to actual bullying.

This guide is a reference tool that will familiarize you with the issues related to each category of violence. How do you recognize a conflict situation and be certain that it is not a case of bullying? What should you do when a child is experiencing bullying or violence? This guide will answer these questions.

It also recommends strategies to create a positive and caring environment for your children and their peers at school, home and in other areas of their lives. This approach, called social and emotional learning, is later described in this guide and will be implemented in the Quebec school system over the next three years. It has already been tried and tested elsewhere in North America to prevent students from dropping out and to provide a healthy and safe environment.

Enjoy!

Jean-Sébastien Bourré

Author and Elementary School Teacher
M.A. in Arts Education (UQAM)

CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

Before directly addressing bullying, we need to first define violence, since violence is at the root of all types of aggression. Bullying is a type of violence with more serious and severe long-term consequences for victims, aggressors and witnesses (e.g. serious mental health problems, loss of self-esteem and dropping out of school); this will be more thoroughly examined in the subsequent section. By describing the various types of violence and their impact on the community, we will be able to identify and understand various ways in which it can happen.

When we face a conflict situation between children, we must carefully identify the issues and possible solutions. To describe a situation, it is important to choose our words wisely. How we view a problem and how we resolve it serve as an example for our children. We are their immediate models and we should remember that ambiguity may lead to outbursts. They learn from both positive and negative models and they will inevitably emulate what they see.

WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

As mentioned on the website of the *Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche*, we need to agree on a precise definition of violence, since it can bring “solid support to the school community, in establishing objectives to prevent and deal with violence and in determining the actions to take and evaluating their impact.” This also applies to other environments.

VIOLENCE:

Any use of force—verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual—against any person, by an individual or a group, with intent to directly or indirectly wrong, injure or oppress that person by attacking his or her integrity, psychological or physical well-being, rights or property¹.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A VIOLENT SITUATION

When a violent situation occurs, it is important to note the following characteristics:

- Aggressors initiate a **power relationship** between their victims and themselves, which causes an imbalance of power. Aggressors have a negative advantage over their victims, who feel weak and powerless.
- Type of aggressors: The aggressor may be a single individual, a group of individuals (e.g. student, adult, parent, staff member, sports team) or a community.
- Aggressors **intend** to do harm (negative intent towards victims), injure or oppress victims.
- Aggression is usually an isolated act of violence. It may arise as the result of a disagreement (conflict) or an impulsive act by one or more individuals. To prevent aggression from recurring over time and turning into bullying, it is essential to intervene appropriately.

1. *Education Act*, Section 13.3, Civil Code of Québec.

HOW TO INTERVENE

- 1** First, make sure you know the whole story and properly assess the problem. The children's account must include their own actions and involvement. Sometimes children are afraid of being scolded and conceal the harm they have done to another individual or other individuals. In the case of an isolated act of violence, very often, children who say they were victims took revenge by hitting or verbally assaulting the aggressors in order to defend themselves, or they may have even started it.
 - a.** You should also make sure that the act was not simply a one-time incident or "scrap."
 - b.** If it is not an incident, ask whether the act was repeated several times over a period of time.
- 2** Then see if the children can handle the situation by themselves. (Do they have any possible solutions in mind?).
- 3** Ask them whether they have tried to get help from school resources or the place where the incident occurred (e.g. responsible adults, parents in the home, on school grounds, older brothers or sisters).
- 4** Suggest possible solutions and ways to prevent future incidents:
 - a.** They should not take revenge or any form of retaliation that could make the situation worse.
 - i.** They should carefully choose their words to end a conflict or aggression rather than make the situation worse (e.g. "This isn't the way to behave," "Leave me alone," "I don't like that," "Calm down and tell me how you feel")
 - ii.** They may decide to remain silent and consult a responsible adult if they feel unable to resolve the problem by themselves or not listened to.
 - iii.** In the case of physical abuse, they should withdraw and seek help to restore the power balance.
 - iv.** Show them how to listen to others and put themselves in the other person's shoes.
- 5** Intervene if necessary. To do so, set your emotions aside. We often get carried away by the fact that we are attached to the child we are defending. This sometimes prevents us from properly resolving a situation. Harassing, insulting or injuring the child who hurt our child will not stop the aggressor from doing it again. On the contrary, the aggressor may want to seek revenge.
 - a.** The aggressors may also need help. They may be experiencing a difficult situation at home or in another area of their lives. What was truly underlying their frustration? Ask yourself that question; the answer may enable you to react appropriately without tormenting your child or the aggressor.
 - b.** Pay attention to the aggressor's feelings.
 - c.** Just like your child, the aggressor can also learn a lesson. Do not miss this golden opportunity to raise their awareness about listening and empathy.
- 6** Take preventive action with witnesses: encourage them to report violence and help victims. They should be aware of their share of responsibility in these situations.

TYPES OF VIOLENCE

WHAT IS DIRECT AND INDIRECT VIOLENCE?

To better understand the problem of violence, it is important to make the distinction between direct and indirect violence. The two categories and forms of violence are as follows:

DIRECT VIOLENCE

Characteristic: Occurs in the presence of the victim. The aggressors' behaviour, words and actions are directed at the victim.

Physical abuse: Shoving, hitting, kicking or spitting at the victim; confining the victim in a cramped space, blocking him/her, using physical force to hold him/her down; inflicting bodily injuries; hiding, breaking or stealing the victim's belongings.

Verbal abuse: Teasing the victim in a mean way, insulting and humiliating the victim; giving the victim mean nicknames; teasing the victim about his/her appearance, handicap, physical difference or clothes; uttering threats against the victim's parents, siblings or friends; laughing at the victim's gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity; embarrassing the victim by verbal provocation; harassing or ridiculing the victim.

INDIRECT VIOLENCE

Characteristic: Occurs in the absence of the victim. Behaviours are often behind-the-back and harder to see. Victims are not necessarily aware of the behaviour, but they do notice a change in how others view them.

Psychological abuse: Ignoring or cutting off contact with the victim; spreading rumours about him/her; damaging his/her reputation; breaking up his/her friendships; excluding the victim from a group; getting his/her peers to reject him/her; playing dirty tricks on the victim without his/her knowledge.

REMEMBER:

Physical abuse attempts to dominate and control the other person.

Verbal abuse attempts to humiliate, belittle and control the other person.

Psychological abuse attempts to isolate the victim.

According to the report entitled *Portrait de la violence dans les établissements d'enseignement au Québec*:

- 21% of elementary students and 17% of secondary students say they are insulted or called names by fellow students at least two or three times per month during the school year.
- 20% of elementary school staff and 15% of secondary school staff say they are on the receiving end of rude remarks or insults by students at least two or three times per month during the school year.

However, we must keep in mind that verbal abuse is the most common form of violence, both inside and outside of school. To talk about it with your child, or to teach them how to use appropriate language, consult the resources available on the link below. The documents are part of an activity that took place in Quebec schools in October 2015 during Anti-Bullying and Anti-Violence Awareness Week in Schools. Some schools may have not yet had the time to participate in this activity.

<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/references/publications/resultats-de-la-recherche/detail/article/prevention-de-la-violence-verbale/>



HEALTHY COMMUNICATION TIPS

It is essential to develop healthy communication habits. To this end, the Ministry has provided the following communication tips for young people and their parents.

YOUNG PEOPLE

What can you do, in practical terms, to help maintain a good climate at your school and make sure oral communication is both positive and constructive?

In your everyday communications, you could, for example:

- greet the people you meet;
- thank the people who help you;
- remark on and encourage good deeds by other people;
- listen carefully to the other person's message;
- make sure the other person has understood what you wanted to say;
- avoid swearing;
- allow other people to speak without interrupting them;
- express your opinions, feelings and frustrations in a calm, respectful way, without accusing people;
- be open and take an interest in other people, while respecting their differences;
- think carefully about the words and expressions you use.

PARENTS

As your children's primary educators, you must encourage them to adopt positive oral communication habits.

You could:

- Set a positive example in your own communications with your children and other people.
- Help your children to reflect on the conditions conducive to constructive dialogue that will prevent tensions, conflicts and verbal abuse. For example:
 - listening carefully to what other people are trying to say;
 - making sure they are understood when speaking;
 - choosing their words and expressions carefully;
 - avoiding swearing when expressing dissatisfaction.
- Encourage your children to express their opinions, feelings and frustrations in a calm and respectful way, without accusing people.
- Talk to your children about some of the situations they encounter in everyday life.

This gives you a chance to convey values such as openness to others, respect for differences and peaceful conflict resolution.

<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/school-boards/dossiers/bullying-and-violence-in-the-schools/anti-bullying-and-violence-awareness-week/2015-preventing-verbal-abuse/parents/>

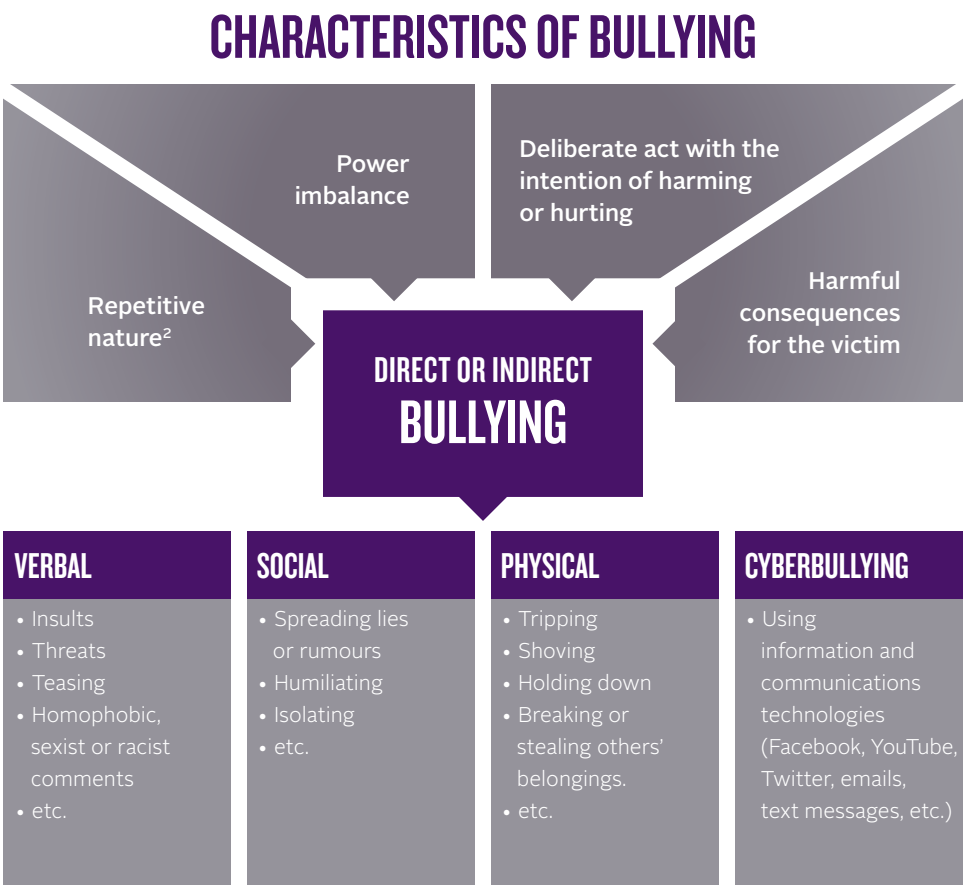
WHAT IS BULLYING?

Although there are several categories of violence, it is important to understand that bullying is the expression of one or more types of violence against the same individual, usually referred to as the “victim.” **These expressions of violence occur repeatedly.**

BULLYING: (Education Act)

“Any repeated direct or indirect behaviour, comment, act or gesture, whether deliberate or not, including in cyberspace, which occurs in a context where there is a power imbalance between the persons concerned and which causes distress and injuries, hurts, oppresses, intimidates or ostracizes.”

The following diagram summarizes bullying. The various categories will be explained below:



2. Depending on the context, certain serious acts (e.g. death threat), although not repetitive in nature, may also be considered bullying.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A BULLYING SITUATION

In addition to the previously mentioned characteristics of violence (power imbalance, victim feels powerless and weak, aggressor's negative intent to harm, and type of aggressor), it is important to remember the repetitive nature of aggression and the negative consequences for victims. In fact, victims of bullying often suffer retaliation by the same individuals on a daily basis. Attacks are usually similar in nature and are repeated to cause harm to the individual. This causes long-term adverse psychological effects, which will be discussed further on.

TYPES OF BULLYING

The types of violence involved are mainly direct and indirect violence. You will recognize them by consulting the different categories of bullying. We often encounter them in schools³, but that does not mean they do not occur outside school. On the contrary, we should beware of our children's free time. When they are not supervised, they can experience harmful interpersonal relationships.

DISCRIMINATION:

Discrimination often starts in elementary school in harmless ways.

Pay attention to teasing about:

- a physical feature ("You're fat," "You smell," "Your clothes are ugly.");
- a first or family name (nickname that makes everyone laugh except the person targeted);
- a learning difficulty, or in a game or a sport ("You suck.").

SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

- Unwanted acts or comments aimed at the targeted individual;
- Repeated acts towards the same person may be considered harassment:
 - Rubbing, touching or pinching other students' body parts;
 - Making comments, jokes or looks with sexual connotations;
 - Spreading sexual rumours about an individual (e.g. "She's a slut.");
 - Forcing sexual contacts;
 - Sharing texts, photographs or drawings of the victim in delicate situations.

3. Adaptation of the descriptions found on pages 18 and 19 of the *Preventing and Reducing School Violence and Bullying* guide written by Camil Sanfaçon for Fondation Jasmin Roy.

HOMOPHOBIC HARASSMENT:

Homophobia is more prevalent among young boys than girls. Homophobic behaviour is directed not only at homosexual persons; it can also target persons whose appearance or behaviour does not conform to traditional gender stereotypes. For example, a young man who is weak in physical education or competitive sports may be called names such as “fag,” “queer,” “sissy,” etc.

TIPS ABOUT THE USE OF CERTAIN POPULAR EXPRESSIONS:

To express a lack of interest or dislike, teach your children to use appropriate language that does not offend a targeted group of individuals. Just like we do not say “It’s black” or “It’s heterosexual” to mean something is boring or unpleasant, we need to change our vocabulary and avoid saying “it’s gay” to mean “it’s boring.” “That’s so gay” is a common saying among youth, particularly among boys. Whether consciously or not, this implies that being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning is not normal or socially acceptable, whereas this is not the case.

Girls often use words such as “whore,” “slut” and “bitch” to express both hatred and friendship. Interpretation of the meaning depends on the intention behind the words. The latest book by the essayist Jasmin Roy, “#Bitch,” takes a look at this new violent reality among girls.

XENOPHOBIC HARASSMENT:

Xenophobia, as with homophobia, consists of words and actions that intend to exclude a person from a group because he or she is “different.” Xenophobia “refers to the fear of strangers, i.e. verbally abusing someone of a different nationality⁴”.

Moreover, “xenophobia and racism often overlap, but are distinct phenomena. Whereas racism usually entails distinction based on physical characteristic differences, such as skin colour, hair type, facial features, etc., xenophobia implies behaviour based on the idea that the other is foreign to or originates from outside the community or nation” (Ibid.).

Xenophobia makes fun of or draws attention to:

- skin colour;
- accent;
- the fact that the individual comes from elsewhere.

4. UNESCO, “Xenophobia,” Social and Human Sciences: International Migrations [Online October 11, 2015]. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/xenophobia/>

Taxing:

Using verbal threats to extort property or money from someone by force. The victim hands over the object or money out of fear of being injured.

Cyberbullying (electronic aggression):

The problem is getting worse and affecting the vast majority of individuals of all ages and genders. A section is devoted to this topic later in the guide.

TIPS:

It is your duty to take action when you witness any of these forms of bullying. It is essential to teach children to accept and respect differences and to be aware of the impact of their remarks. To develop empathy, teach them to put themselves in other people's shoes.



BULLYING AND CONFLICT: A DISTINCTION NEEDS TO BE MADE!

Conflict is the result of a disagreement between two or more individuals, whereas bullying, as we have seen, is an imbalance of power between two or more individuals. There is generally no power imbalance in a conflict situation.

CONFLICT

During conflict, the desires or objectives of those involved are incompatible and it is difficult to find common ground. Sooner or later, all children experience conflict and teasing. These situations are part of the child's socialization process. All adults also experience conflict. To avoid conflict, we would have to live in a cave and no longer have contact with another human being! We therefore have to teach children to compromise and to be skillful negotiators.

Emphasize mediation during your child's initial conflicts and use conflict resolution approaches. Staff at your child's school can suggest a variety of approaches, but we encourage you to consult our conflict resolution process in the appendix (page 41). Resolving conflict peacefully restores the balance of power between the children involved and helps them to make compromises and quickly reach an agreement.

Mediation and conflict resolution are not appropriate techniques to deal with a bullying situation. Since there is an imbalance of power, victims often lie to avoid further problems with aggressors, giving you the impression that it was simply a conflict. You will therefore have missed an opportunity to end the hostilities. Repeated bullying will likely continue and possibly intensify for a certain period.

A fight, an insult or isolated threat does not necessarily constitute bullying, but these violent actions are reprehensible and we need to intervene. When we intervene appropriately, we prevent the behaviours from recurring. Proper intervention will restore the balance of power and deter the aggressors from repeating their behaviour. By allowing them to socialize and getting to know one another, they can usually develop a connection, without necessarily being best of friends.

To clarify the differences between “bullying” and “conflict,” see the table on the following page.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CONFLICT

CONFLICT

CHARACTERISTICS

- A normal situation, not necessarily negative.
- It may be an accident; in this case, the children who were “bumped” will say that the person hit them. Once you are properly informed, you may realize that it was an accident.
- A situation that arises occasionally and under certain circumstances.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

- In general, the two children are of equal strength. They will both retaliate and “stand their ground.”
- The students know each other and may be friends.

CAUSES AND EXPRESSIONS

- Conflict occurs after a disagreement, a difference of opinion or perception.
- Conflict may be caused by either child.
- The conflict is not expected. There is no negative intent to cause harm, as it was not planned. None of the children concerned would say “I’m going to hurt him/her.”

PROBLEM SOLVING

- Children generally accept help to solve the problem.
- Children may accept to fix their mistakes.
- During a disagreement, after discussions and mutual apologies, an agreement is generally reached.

AND BULLYING

BULLYING

- An abnormal situation, intentional acts (not an accident).
- A child endures repetitive acts of aggression without saying anything about the abuse from his/her peers.

- The bully is in a dominant position and abuses power over the victim, who does not know how to defend him/herself.
- The children are not necessarily friends, even if they might have been in the past.

- Bullying occurs when the bully wants to use power over the victim.
- It is always the same child who is attacked or insulted, without being able to respond or defend him/herself.
- Bullying acts are intentional and can be expected. The bully may warn silent witnesses about what he/she will do to the victim. In some cases, the bully threatens and warns that he/she will continue, especially if the victim reports his/her distress in order to get help.

- Very often, the bully will accuse the victim, will not admit to wrongdoing and will not recognize the severity of the behaviour.
- In order to fix his/her mistakes, the bully often has to be forced by an adult.
- The victim does not need to apologize to the aggressor or fix mistakes.
- Since it is not simply a disagreement, one cannot expect the parties to reach an agreement.
- Unless the victim speaks out and gets help, the situation goes on and may get worse.



HOW TO INTERVENE OUTSIDE SCHOOL OR WITH SCHOOL STAFF

You can adapt the following approach to your situation. Do not put everything on the shoulders of school staff: it is essential that they take action for behaviour that occurs inside school; similarly, it is important that you help change the climate for behaviour that occurs outside school. If you realize that your child is an aggressor, you can draw inspiration from this approach.

OUTSIDE SCHOOL:

- 1 Do not react quickly and do not be blinded by your emotions.
 - a. Gather information by questioning the victim and then questioning witnesses if they have been identified. **Take notes if necessary.**
 - b. Remain objective: If children feel you are working AGAINST them, they may suddenly withdraw. If this happens, you will have lost a great opportunity to gather relevant information.
- 2 Do not intervene with the victim and aggressor at the same time. You should speak with them separately. Similarly, to avoid doing more harm than good to the victim, speak with witnesses individually.
 - a. To intervene with witnesses and the aggressor, you could contact the parents and prepare to intervene together. Several people taking concerted action may make it easier to identify the issues, to ask the right questions and to deepen your understanding of the situation. Do not attempt to be a superhero by trying to solve everything by yourself!
- 3 Pay attention to everyone's feelings and ask about motives.
 - a. If the motives do not seem clear to the victims, reassure them by telling them that they do not deserve this. Explain to them how to get help and tell them that under no circumstances should they keep it a secret. Tell them that you will take action to ensure that it stops.

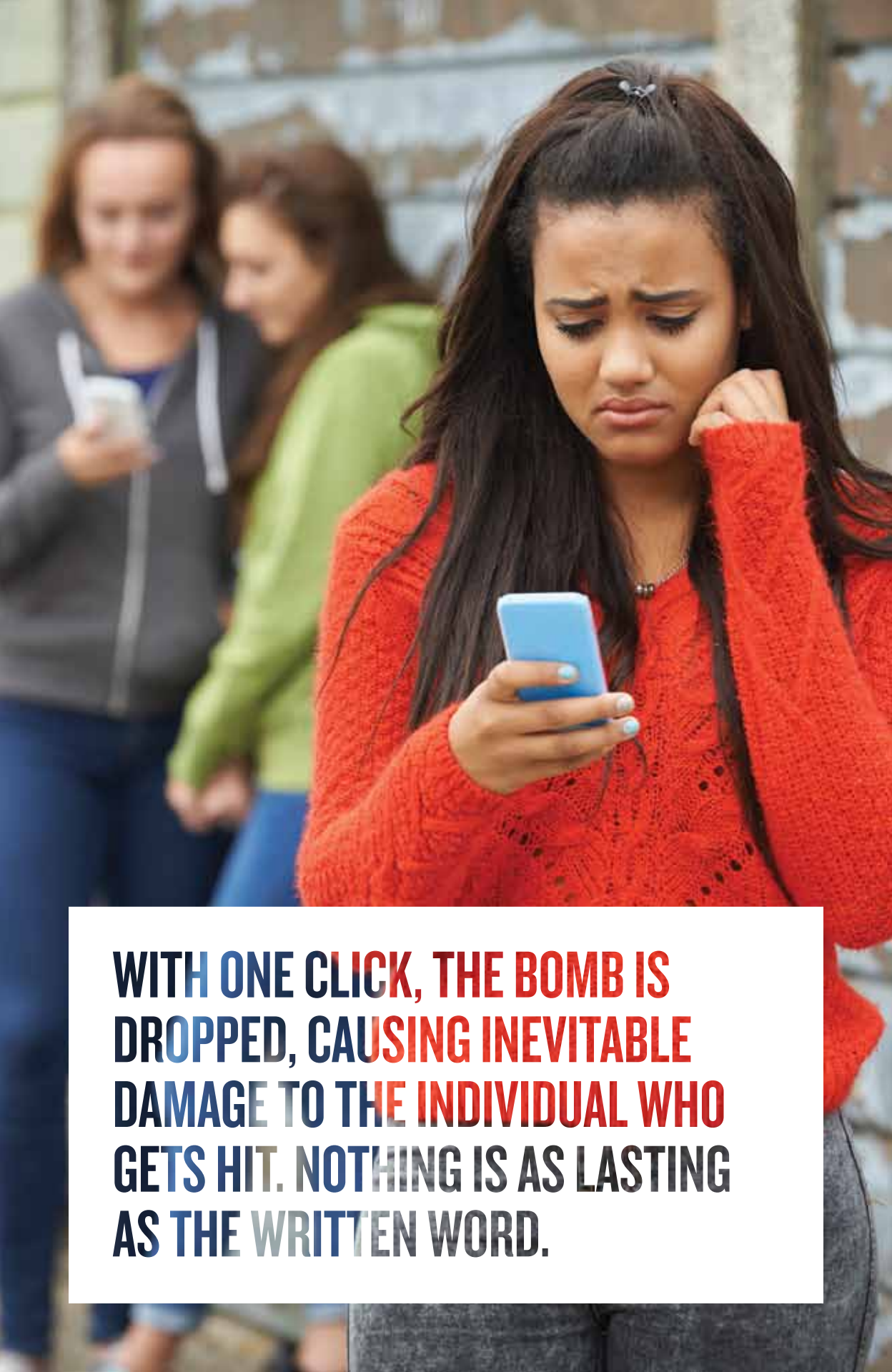
- 3 b.** If the motives do not seem clear to the witnesses, it is important to take preventive action. It is essential to explain how to behave, to talk about accepting differences, to encourage empathy, and to tell witnesses how to help victims and how to get along. Also, encourage them to always be model witnesses.
- c.** If the motives do not seem clear to the aggressor or if they are based on prejudice, we must overcome prejudice by adopting a positive attitude. It is important to teach positive approaches.
 - i.** Do not ridicule the aggressors, as they may withdraw and you would lose an opportunity to solve the situation once and for all.
 - ii.** Put them in the other individual's shoes (empathy).
 - iii.** Specify the aggressors' unacceptable behaviours.
 - 1.** If they do not seem to show any emotion or remorse, consult specialists (consult the resource list at the end of the guide).
- 4** Keep in mind that some aggressors do not realize they are aggressors: this realization can quickly help them to understand the situation and to show empathy.
- 5** Once the situation has been defused, the behaviours have been called into question, and the aggressors have understood and identified positive behaviours, encourage them to fix their mistakes (e.g. by writing a letter of apology, doing several favours for the victim).
 - a.** Make sure that the victim agrees to the proposed restorative actions. Help both of them with this important step, which involves rebalancing the power between them. Encourage them to discuss some topics, which may allow them to discover some common interests.
 - i.** Without necessarily making them become friends, simply ensure that they develop mutual respect.
- 6** Once the intervention has been completed and the restorative action has been carried out, make sure you do follow-up. Intervening once and then letting it go will not prevent it from happening again. Instead, you should meet again separately with the victims, witnesses and aggressors to ask them how their interpersonal relationships are going and to ensure that the individuals are making progress in the development of good social skills.
- 7** If the situation recurs and you do not see any change in the aggressors' behaviour towards the victim, contact the appropriate authorities (e.g. police, youth protection).

INSIDE OR AROUND THE SCHOOL: complaint and intervention process and who to contact

- 1** Immediately contact the school administration and demand an emergency appointment. If possible, avoid telephone appointments.
- 2** Make sure special education technicians or staff responsible for “bullying and violence” are present or are quickly informed of the situation so that they can intervene.
 - a.** The administration must fill out a form about the situation you reported.
 - b.** Calmly provide support for your children and ask them questions to help them open up and make a complaint.
 - c.** Do not make any judgment about the aggressors in front of your children or school staff.
- 3** To deal with violence or bullying, request a report while the intervention is being carried out.
- 4** If it happens again, inform the school administration and concerned stakeholders.
 - a.** If that does not work, call the school board to speak with:
 - i.** Student ombudsman;
 - ii.** Commissioner;
 - iii.** School administration's supervisor.
 1. This usually gets results.
 - b.** Do not threaten, get angry with or insult school staff;
 - i.** You are entitled to share your fears and concerns about the victims, but do it in a civilized manner. Show good faith while participating in the intervention process.
 1. Remember that proper intervention seeks to understand the difficulties experienced by the victims, aggressors and witnesses. Bullying is a dynamic between all parties.

It is important to be appropriately involved in the intervention carried out at school. Whether they are victims, aggressors or witnesses, support your children by asking them questions at home about behaviours that foster good relations with peers. Tell them how to report a violent or bullying situation by informing the principal, teacher, support staff or educator verbally or in writing. It is critical to take action so that the individuals affected receive the necessary support to overcome their problems.

Remind them that if they were in the same situation, they, too, would appreciate help with their problems.



**WITH ONE CLICK, THE BOMB IS
DROPPED, CAUSING INEVITABLE
DAMAGE TO THE INDIVIDUAL WHO
GETS HIT. NOTHING IS AS LASTING
AS THE WRITTEN WORD.**

CYBERBULLYING⁵

New technologies: a weapon of mass destruction at your fingertips!

CYBERBULLYING STATISTICS
(source: *Réseau Éducation Média*):

25% of young net surfers say they have received hate messages about other people by email.

34% of 9 to 17-year-olds say they have been the victim of bullying or sexual harassment during the school year.

- Of these, **27% were victims of cyberbullying**.

For those who report sexual harassment, the situation is the inverse: **47% were harassed at school and 70% online**.

THE SERVICE DE POLICE DE LA VILLE DE MONTRÉAL (SPVM)
DEFINES **CYBERBULLYING** AS FOLLOWS:

Cyberbullying is posting threatening, hateful, offensive or degrading messages about someone, using words or images. It also includes harassment.

Cyberbullying uses new technology to commit the following forms of violence: verbal, psychological and sexual abuse. These forms of violence are used against others in order to hurt, bully or harm them. Once again, the concepts involved are **negative intent** and **repetition**. One hate message does not constitute cyberbullying. However, prompt intervention will prevent it from turning into bullying. On the other hand, if an individual is targeted on social networks and is sent offensive or insulting messages every day, then this is a case of cyberbullying.

People who send messages forget them quickly; for them, it is harmless and over once they click “send.” However, it is not as easily forgotten by the recipient. When people receive a hate message, they are saddened and worried, so they often read the message over and over.

5. The content in this section has been adapted from the website of the Service de police de la ville de Montréal (SPVM) with their permission. The author would like to thank them for agreeing to share this information.

SEXTING:

Sexting means exchanging text messages with another person whose comments are exclusively confined to talking about sex. It consists in sharing our desires and fantasies with another person who does likewise. Sometimes suggestive images are exchanged with the implied understanding that the person will keep the images private.

In some situations, there is a **power imbalance**: a bully may force an individual to send naked photos of him or herself (the individual complies in order to stop the bully from continually harassing them) or the bully may use threats such as "If you don't do it, I'll do this or say that about you to others."

Sexual abuse means **forcing others** to send explicit images or to undress in front of their webcam, by directly uttering threats or threatening to harm one of their relatives (e.g. parent, friend), or threatening to share photos of an individual with others in order to harm them.

In addition, image rights are distorted by new technologies. There are no limitations or clear rules in this regard. What we believe we are showing to a single individual can easily be shared with countless individuals during a conflict, or when a friendship or relationship falls apart. Sharing images with numerous people is an attempt to damage the individual's reputation. Therefore, there is **intent to harm**. The person is easily depicted as a "trouble-maker," "whore" or "slut." The subsequent ridicule, in person and on social networks, occurs **repeatedly**.

Imagine the surprise of someone who discovers that the entire school has seen naked pictures of him or her. How would you feel if this happened to you? Not only would your reputation be destroyed, but you would also experience serious psychological and emotional effects. It is therefore essential to raise young people's awareness about protecting their image and integrity and to teach them how to use new technologies responsibly.

CYBERBULLYING CAN USE MANY DIFFERENT MEANS:

- Email (messages, photos);
- Chat rooms;
- Sexting on cell phones (sharing of messages and photos);
- Websites (e.g. social networks such as Facebook).

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I RECEIVE A THREATENING EMAIL?

You can file a complaint at your neighbourhood Police station. Make sure you do not erase the message(s) so you can provide proof for the investigation. A police officer will contact you to ask you to forward the full headers of the message(s).

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF SOMEONE MAKES A WEBPAGE FULL OF INSULTS AND LIES ABOUT ME?

In some cases, this may be a criminal infraction (see below), but since there are provisions of the Civil Code that apply specifically to respecting reputation and privacy, your best recourse is usually to go to the civil courts.

CYBERBULLYING CAN BE A CRIME (reference: SPVM)

Some cyberbullying behaviour actually breaks laws in the Criminal Code of Canada. For example, the Criminal Code deals with the following issues:

Defamatory libel

Example: Using Internet technology such as websites to ridicule others by telling stories, jokes or posting images.

Extortion

Example: Sending threatening emails to classmates to demand they bring valuable objects to school.

Criminal harassment

Example: Using Internet technology to repeatedly communicate with someone knowing they feel harassed.

False messages

Example: Using an electronic messaging system to send false information with the intention of harming someone.

Uttering threats

Example: Using a messaging system to send threatening emails to people.

PREVENTION TIPS

HERE ARE SOME PREVENTION TIPS TO GIVE YOUR CHILD REGARDING CYBERBULLYING⁶:

- *LEAVE the online environment when the situation becomes a problem (e.g. when you receive a threatening email) and tell an adult you trust.*
- *NEVER respond to hateful or threatening messages. The bully is likely expecting this and will use it against the person, with or without the help of others.*
- *NEVER disclose personal information such as your name, address, phone number or passwords.*
- *BLOCK addresses and individuals who bully. Whether they are social networks, email addresses or phone numbers, you can block people, addresses and numbers.*
- *WRITE DOWN the addresses of the bullying messages and alert the Internet service provider or cell phone company, as applicable.*
- *SAVE all bullying messages received by email, text message or instant messaging.*
- *ALERT the local police department if you suspect a crime has been committed.*

School staff often have to manage the consequences of cyberbullying: the students affected have to nervously face their aggressors or the people who received information about them. We notice a change in the children's behaviour or attitude without knowing the reasons behind it. When the children are questioned ("Did you have a fight with a friend?" "What happened?"), they are evasive and do not dare answer for fear of making the problem worse. They carry a heavy burden on their shoulders and do not know how to deal with it.

It sometimes takes a while to realize that the problem stems from an incident that occurred the night before in cyberspace. Despite specific, well-developed protocols in recent years, it is still difficult for staff to intervene effectively, as they do not have access to the messages, victims are not open about the motives and content received, and aggressors do not report themselves. Instead, they blame the victim: "Ask him, he'll tell you himself!" "I don't know, she's always making up stories!" We sometimes have to rely on the help of witnesses, but it can take several days before they show up.

Nevertheless, take preventive action with your children by showing them how to properly use new technologies, cautioning them and encouraging them to help out if they are witnesses of a predicament in cyberspace.

Be positive role models for the use of new technologies.

6. Adapted from <http://www.accroc.qc.ca/wordpress/intimidation-parent-quoi-faire/> and from the SPVM website.

CANADIAN BULLYING STATISTICS

- Canada has the 9th highest rate of bullying in the 13-years-old category on a scale of 35 countries⁷.
- At least 1 in 3 adolescent students in Canada have reported being bullied recently⁸.
- Among adult Canadians, 38% of males and 30% of females reported having experienced occasional or frequent bullying during their school years⁹.
- 47% of Canadian parents report having a child victim of bullying¹⁰.
- Any participation in bullying increases risk of suicidal ideas in youth¹¹.

7. *Bullying in Canada: How Intimidation Affects Learning*, Canadian Council on Learning. www.ccl-ca/pdfs/lessonslearning/2008/36-03_20_08-F_cs.pdf

8. Molcho, M. Craig, W., Due, P., Pickett, W., Harel-Fisch, Y., Overpeck, M. and HBSC Bullying Writing Group. "Cross-National Time Trends in Bullying Behaviour 1994-2006: Findings from Europe and North America," *International Journal of Public Health*, No. 54 (Suppl. 2), vol. 20, 2009, p.225-234.

9. Kim, Y. S. and B. Leventhal. "Bullying and Suicide. A review," *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, No. 2, 2008, p. 133-154.

10. www.bullyfreealberta.ca/homophobic_bullying.htm

11. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2011001/article/11530-eng.htm>



VICTIMS

"The adults in the lives of children with few social skills have the responsibility to pay close attention to all types of negative acts the child may be experiencing, as well as all behavioural changes that could indicate silent suffering."

"Victims live in a climate of tension and confusion. They avoid talking about it and feel powerless. Because they can't find a solution to the problem, they lose confidence in themselves. Sometimes, they even justify their attackers."

"Victims are shy, do not dare talk about their fears or distress and often think they are responsible for what happens to them."

– Camil Sanfaçon in "Preventing and Reducing School Violence and Bullying,"
Fondation Jasmin Roy.

VICTIM'S CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIOURS:*

- Few social skills, trouble fitting into a group and making friends, withdrawal and isolation (e.g. often alone, no friends or playmates at school);
- Lack of interest in school or hobbies, declining academic performance;
- Sudden major change in habits (e.g. they no longer surf the Internet);
- Avoids going to certain places;
- Sensitivity, feels like you are always picking on them and constantly on their back;
- Low self-esteem (makes negative comments about themselves in all situations: "I can't do it," "I'm no good," etc.);
- Aggressive behaviours (over-reacts**);
- Perception of not being interesting to others;
- Fearful and submissive;
- Tries to solve problems by distancing themselves from their aggressors, remaining silent, downplaying the seriousness of the acts when we bring it up, and becoming defensive.

* The above-mentioned characteristics are not applicable to every bullying victim. They may vary depending on the individual's age, character and the nature of the bullying.

** Due to their distorted outlook, some people who have been bullied over-react to certain situations. This is a consequence of bullying; over the long term, these individuals will feel ostracized, rejected and judged, even if this is not the reality. Therefore, we must begin teaching children good communication and socialization skills with peers at a very early age. To avoid predicaments, it is essential to teach the value of empathy as part of social and emotional learning. The sooner they understand what the other person is feeling, the sooner they will stop the destructive behaviours towards others and themselves.



Students who have been victims of bullying may become bullies themselves. That is why the line between the victim and the bully is not always well defined. “Mixed” victims (both victim and bully) react violently when teased, have trouble understanding the intentions of their peers, and are impulsive. Very often, other students will purposely get them going just for the fun of watching their reaction. However, this type of victim is the one who gets the least sympathy from both children and adults. Because their behaviour is often excessive, people tend to say that “they were asking for it!”¹²

12. Adaptation of the “Students Who Bully Their Peers” section on pages 26-27 of the *Preventing and Reducing School Violence and Bullying* guide by Camil Sanfaçon for Fondation Jasmin Roy.

HOW TO DETERMINE WHETHER MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

Ask them to accurately describe the problem they are having with their peers. It could be an isolated incident, unplanned by the aggressor. If this is the case, then it is a one-time aggression under the “violence” category as opposed to “bullying.” Sometimes there is a misunderstanding, incident or conflict.

It is important to gather information from your children and their peers. After finding out what happened, you will have a better idea of how to intervene. Under all circumstances, intervention by caring adults is needed.

CRITERIA TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT IS A CASE OF BULLYING

Keep an eye on what the children are doing. Pay attention to the following criteria:

- Power imbalance (number of individuals, age or social status);
- Intent to harm;
- Feelings of distress of the bullied student (emotional distress);
- Low self-esteem;
- Feelings of isolation and exclusion;
- Repeated bullying over a given period;
- Witnesses often passive, withdrawn or silent.

SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED:

- Loss of appetite;
- Trouble falling asleep;
- Aggressiveness;
- Crying;
- Lack of interest in school and declining academic results;
- Excuses to miss school (e.g. headaches or bellyaches)
- Feels powerless, rejected and hopeless;
- Anxiety;
- Loss of confidence;
- Talks very little about friends;
- Withdrawal (goes to his/her bedroom upon arrival);
- Avoids conversations and gives vague answers;
- Continually isolates him/herself.

HOW AGGRESSORS CHOOSE VICTIMS

The target may be:

- Individuals with few friends;
- Introverted/shy children (unlikely to defend themselves);
- New students without status or friends;
- Children with low self-esteem;
- Children who appear different and therefore easy targets for teasing (e.g. weight, skin colour, disability).

Without making your children victims, pay attention to these characteristics. To confidently face adversity, boost their self-esteem and encourage them to accept their differences and unique qualities.

CONSEQUENCES:

Unfortunately, there are serious consequences to bullying, ranging from **loss of self-esteem** to **depression or other mental health disorders (anorexia, bulimia, self-mutilation, anxiety)** and, in some cases, even **suicide**.

BULLIES¹³

Children who bully do not necessarily have behaviour problems. For bullies, having power over others enables them to win the approval of others, to draw attention, to feel important, to impress, to feel some sense of control or to feel powerful. Remember that bullying is a relationship problem and that 9 times out of 10, the aggression is committed in front of witnesses. This enables bullies to draw attention.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BULLIES:

- Low parental attachment;
- Aggressive and provocative temperament at a very early age;
- Usually disobedient;
- Refuse to comply with rules;
- Opposition to authority;
- Lack of authority figures;
- Hostile and bossy towards other children;
- Lack of limits;
- Anxiety;
- Feeling of rejection;
- Low self-esteem.

Bullies establish their power over victims (imbalance of power) through their size and physical strength, by targeting their victims' weaknesses, by using their rank in the group or by getting other students to collaborate with them.

BEHAVIOURS OF BULLYING STUDENTS:

- Positive attitude towards the use of violence;
- Tendency to attack, exploit, humiliate, ridicule or denigrate others;
- Impulsiveness;
- Need to dominate others;
- Lack of sympathy towards victims;
- Difficulty in managing conflicts, in expressing themselves and in communicating;
- Tendency to believe that others have hostile intentions.

Avoid labelling children “bullies.” Instead, determine which behaviours are not acceptable and make them aware of their seriousness. Take the time to show them the expected behaviour and reinforce that behaviour each time they exhibit it.

Keep in mind that children who bully others may need help. They may have a sense of psychological distress, and violence becomes a means of escape for them. When intervening in a bullying situation, remember to tell them that they, too, have a right to be loved and we have to find a way to understand their problem and to help them solve it.

13. Adaptation of the “Students Who Bully Their Peers” section on pages 26-27 of the *Preventing and Reducing School Violence and Bullying* guide by Camil Sanfaçon for Fondation Jasmin Roy.

TO HELP VICTIMS AND AGGRESSORS
OUT OF THE DYNAMIC OF VIOLENCE
AND BULLYING,
I **REPORT** HARM DONE TO **ANYONE**.



TYPES OF WITNESSES

In order for aggressors to feel powerful, they need others to witness their actions. Therefore, witnesses play a decisive role in bullying situations. Their attitudes and actions can positively or negatively influence the relationship between, and opinions of, bullies and victims. Although witnesses may feel empathy for victims, most will not speak out for fear of becoming victims themselves.

In a bullying dynamic, we must not forget to intervene with witnesses, as they may themselves become aggressors. Witnesses learn from their peers and emulate the behaviours they believe to be a “normal” part of life. We must therefore teach them appropriate social behaviour and raise awareness about differences. Also, remember the previously mentioned forms of violence and bullying in this guide.

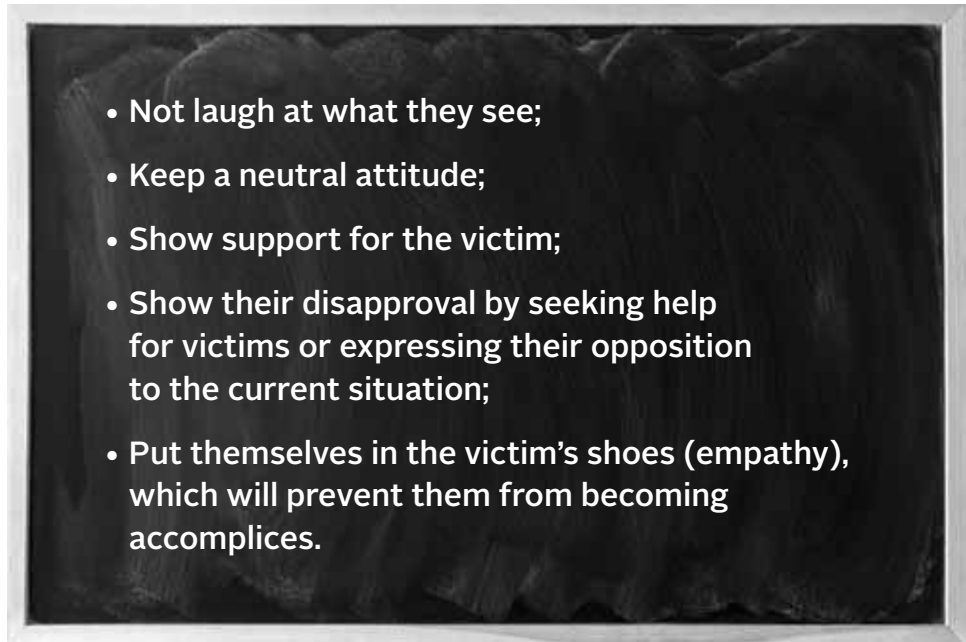
CATEGORIES OF WITNESSES:

Active witnesses or accomplices: These types of witnesses make remarks and laugh about the bullying situation. This encourages aggressors to continue and gratifies them by enhancing their power. Some active witnesses are afraid that the aggressor will attack them, so they say to themselves “It’s better to be on the bully’s side.”

Passive or silent witnesses: These types of witnesses usually keep silent, so they are just as much accomplices as active witnesses. They unintentionally consent to aggressors’ repeated victimization by remaining silent. Sometimes passive witnesses fear retaliation if they intervene or report the incident on behalf of victims.

Responsible witnesses: These types of witnesses intervene on behalf of victims to help stop the bullying. If children witness a situation and feel comfortable, they can intervene by expressing their disapproval (“Why are you doing this? What did she do to you?”). If the witnesses feel less comfortable, they can seek help from an adult, who can help the victims and defuse the situation. When the aggressor leaves, witnesses can approach the victims and offer their support and empathy.

If you want your children to become responsible and self-reliant witnesses and citizens, teach them to:



KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER REGARDING THE WITNESS'S ROLE:

- By their presence, witnesses become a part of the bullying.
- Whether witnesses intervene or not, they will be affected by bullying.
- To eliminate bullying, they need to break the silence.
- It is important to intervene to protect potential victims and ensure their safety.
- Intervening means exercising their sense of responsibility as citizens.
- Intervention can encourage victims to help themselves.
- Intervention can encourage bullies to seek help.
- The impact of intervention is not always known.

<http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/satei/meta-content/tsm.pdf>

CREATING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT AND MAKING THE LINK BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME



Volunteer at your children's school for activities organized by their classroom teacher or staff. To do so, let your children's resource teacher know when you are available.



To foster a healthy relationship, get involved in their extracurricular, sports and artistic activities.



Spend time together and go on outings. This will promote good communication and encourage children to open up more easily when they go through difficult times or when they need help.



Read the school's code of conduct with them and discuss the rules together. Explain why they should respect rules and how their actions could affect other children if they do not.



Realize that your children may make bad decisions at times. They are not perfect; they are learning. Rather than rushing to their defence, ask for information from their teacher, students, adults, educators, friend's parent, etc.



**JUST LIKE MY PEERS,
I'M ENTITLED TO DIGNITY,
RESPECT, SECURITY OF MY
BELONGINGS, BODY AND MIND.**

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES TO USE WITH YOUR CHILD:

(adapted from www.responsiveclassroom.org)

- Teach about empathy and encourage children to pay attention to others' emotions;
- Talk about feelings they experience when helping someone or are being helped;
- Discuss their choices and projects;
- Create rules (children help decide and develop them);
- Apply logical consequences (restorative action in connection with the act to be repaired);
- Use positive language, free of discriminatory remarks or comments that could affect self-esteem;
- Organize the rooms and space;
- Work with families, other children's parents and school staff in order to promote cooperation;
- Include everyone in problem solving.

Applying these principles and strategies on a daily basis will help children reduce anxiety, increase self-confidence, instill empathy, make responsible decisions, and make positive, reasonable and ethical choices. You will also see a difference in their motivation at school and how they handle challenging activities.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT METHOD

Developed by Jean-Sébastien Bourré

- 1 I withdraw into a corner to calm down;
- 2 I breathe through my nose and mouth several times;
- 3 I think about what just happened and I recognize how I'm feeling (feelings);
- 4 When I've calmed down,
I meet with the person;
If he or she isn't ready to speak with me,
I give the person more time to calm down.
- 5 I explain how I'm feeling;
- 6 I listen to the other person explain how he or she feels;
- 7 I honestly describe the conflict and what caused it;
- 8 I suggest solutions;
- 9 I listen to the other person's solutions;
- 10 I try out a solution and if it doesn't work,
I try another;
- 11 We find common ground or we seek the assistance of an adult mediator to find a suitable middle ground to end our conflict.

CONCLUSION

Finally, always remember that you are the immediate model for children and adolescents. Your knowledge, life skills and ability to show empathy and develop healthy relationships with others will be reflected in children's actions.

The basis of prevention is in the creation of a caring climate. Most importantly, before denouncing violent acts and bullying behaviour, social and emotional learning encourages positive actions and attitudes. By promoting emotional management strategies, it greatly reduces the expression of anger. A conflict is just a conflict. It is less likely to degenerate if children and adolescents know how to manage their emotions and use conflict resolution methods.

By being caring guardians of youth and by applying these principles, you will help them grow up happy, confident and well-rounded!

Good luck!

Jean-Sébastien Bourré

Author and Elementary School Teacher

M.A. in Arts Education (UQAM)



USEFUL RESOURCES

NeedHelpNow

How to deal with exploitation (sexting) or blackmail online

NeedHelpNow.ca

<https://needhelpnow.ca/app/en/>

Casel (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning)

Website with more information on the social and emotional learning program

<http://casel.org>

National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Public Health Agency of Canada

(portal that provides access to resources and best practices)

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sfv-avf/index-eng.php>

Centre de prévention du suicide (in French)

www.cpsquebec.ca

Québec Safety Promotion and Crime Prevention Resource Centre

http://www.crpqspc.qc.ca/default_an.asp?fichier=accueil_an.htm

Contes sur moi, du CECOM de l'hôpital Rivière-des-Prairies (in French)

(Programme québécois de promotion des compétences sociales)

<http://cecom.qc.ca/boutique/contes-sur-moi>

Cyberaide

Tipline to report the online sexual exploitation of children and non-consensual distribution of intimate images of an individual under 18 years of age

<https://www.cyberaide.ca/app/en/>

Fluppy, du Centre de psychoéducation (in French)

(Programme d'entraînement et de promotion des compétences sociales pour le préscolaire et le primaire)

http://www.santeestrie.qc.ca/sante_publique/promotion_prevention/fluppy.php

Fondation Jasmin Roy

(The foundation's mission is to fight discrimination, bullying and violence against primary and secondary school children)

<http://www.fondationjasminroy.com>

Gai écoute

<http://www.gaiecouste.org>

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/is-si/index-eng.htm>

Kids Help Phone

(Telephone counselling service for youth under 20 years old)

<http://kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/Home.aspx?lang=en-ca>

Ligne en prévention du suicide (in French)

1-866-APPELLE (1-866-277-3553)

Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche

(activities for children)

<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/references/publications/resultats-de-la-recherche/detail/article/prevention-de-la-violence-verbale/pubLang/1/>

Moi j'agis, l'intimidation c'est fini, Québec Government

www.moi-jagis.com

Première ressource, aide aux parents

1-866-329-4223

<http://www.premiereresource.com/index.php>

Prevnet (Promoting Relationships & Eliminating Violence Network)

<http://www.prevnet.ca/>

Responsive classroom

Website with information on how to better organize space and work

<http://responsiveclassroom.org>

Service de police de la ville de Montréal - Youth Zone

Contains information, tips and games to talk about safety and violence

<http://www.spvm.qc.ca/en/Jeunesse/>

Suicide action Montreal (contact information for all of Québec)

<http://suicideactionmontreal.org/index.php?page=home>

Tel-jeunes

(Free, confidential and professional intervention service for youth)

Phone: 1-800-263-2266

<http://en.teljeunes.com/home>

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Learn Alberta (learnalberta.ca)

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Education Act

[http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.](http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/L13_3/I13_3_A.html)

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<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/dossiers-thematiques/intimidation-et-violence-a-lecole/>

Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche

<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/current-initiatives/bullying-and-violence-in-the-schools/>

Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche

<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/school-boards/dossiers/bullying-and-violence-in-the-schools/anti-bullying-and-violence-awareness-week/2015-preventing-verbal-abuse/parents/>

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<http://responsiveclassroom.org>

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I say **NO** to bullying!



FONDATION
Jasmin Roy

fondationjasminroy.com

BULLYING: WHAT THE LAW SAYS

Bullying can have serious psychological and social consequences.

Bullies and their parents can also face legal consequences.

Bullying Can Be a Crime

Serious bullying and violence are **crimes**. The police can get involved.



Examples:

- threats or physical violence
- criminal harassment (stalking)
- sharing intimate images of others without their consent
- stealing or breaking another's property
- extortion

In some cases, teens under 18 can avoid a criminal court case. Sometimes other measures are more effective.



Bullies can be accused of a crime as of age 12. If the bully is under 12, the director of youth protection can get involved.



Bullying Can Have Other Legal Consequences

Bullying can lead to **civil responsibility** if the victim suffers psychological, physical or financial harm. This is true whether the bullying is a crime or not.

Bullies who are held civilly responsible have to repair the harm they caused. This might include paying money to the victim.

Examples of bullying that can lead to a civil court case:

- sharing photos of other people without their consent
- sharing personal information about others without their consent
- spreading rumours about others that damage their reputations



Bullies can be taken to court in a civil case as soon as they are able to understand the consequences of their actions. This means that children as young as seven can be held responsible for the harm they cause.

When bullying involves discrimination, the victim can complain to the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse* (Quebec human rights commission).



PARENTS MUST TAKE ACTION.

If your child is the victim, you must act to stop the bullying and defend your child's rights, in court or in other ways.

If your child is the bully, you can be held responsible for the harm your minor child causes. You will have to prove you fulfilled your duty to care for, supervise and educate your child.



To learn more:
educaloi.qc.ca/en/bullying



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