

WARNING SIGNS

The following behaviors may indicate that a student is being bullied or is at risk of being bullied. For any student you're concerned about, check all that apply.

When any of these behaviors are evident and persistent over time, you should definitely investigate. There's no magic number of warning signs that indicate a student is definitely being bullied—but it's better to be wrong than to allow a student to suffer.

Some of these characteristics are obviously more serious than others. A child who talks about suicide or carries a weapon to school, for example, needs immediate help. Don't wait for the child to come to you (this may never happen). Following the guidelines established by your school or district, contact a professional who is specially trained in dealing with high-risk behaviors.

Student's name: _____ **Today's date:** _____

SCHOOL AND SCHOOLWORK

- ___ 1. Sudden change in school attendance/academic performance
- ___ 2. Loss of interest in schoolwork/academic performance/homework
- ___ 3. Decline in quality of schoolwork/academic performance*
- ___ 4. Academic success; appears to be the teacher's pet*
- ___ 5. Difficulty concentrating in class, easily distracted
- ___ 6. Goes to recess late and comes back early
- ___ 7. Has a learning disability or difference
- ___ 8. Lack of interest in school-sponsored activities/events
- ___ 9. Drops out of school-sponsored activities he or she enjoys

*True, #3 and #4 are opposites. They are also extremes. Watch for any extremes or sudden changes; these can be signs that something stressful is happening in a student's life.

SOCIAL

- ___ 1. Lonely, withdrawn, isolated
- ___ 2. Poor or no social/interpersonal skills
- ___ 3. No friends or fewer friends than other students, unpopular, often/always picked last for groups or teams
- ___ 4. Lacks a sense of humor, uses inappropriate humor
- ___ 5. Often made fun of, laughed at, picked on, teased, put down, and/or called names by other students, doesn't stand up for himself or herself
- ___ 6. Often pushed around, kicked, and/or hit by other students, doesn't defend himself or herself
- ___ 7. Uses "victim" body language—hunches shoulders, hangs head, won't look people in the eye, backs off from others



WARNING SIGNS (CONTINUED)

- 8. Has a noticeable difference that sets him or her apart from peers
- 9. Comes from a racial, cultural, ethnic, and/or religious background that puts him or her in the minority
- 10. Prefers the company of adults during lunch and other free times
- 11. Teases, pesters, and irritates others, eggs them on, doesn't know when to stop
- 12. Suddenly starts bullying other students

PHYSICAL

- 1. Frequent illness*
- 2. Frequent complaints of headache, stomachache, pains*
- 3. Scratches, bruises, damage to clothes or belongings, etc. that don't have obvious explanations
- 4. Sudden stammer or stutter
- 5. Has a physical disability
- 6. Has a physical difference that sets him/her apart from peers—wears glasses, is overweight/underweight, taller/shorter than peers, "talks funny," "looks funny," "walks funny," etc.
- 7. Change in eating patterns, sudden loss of appetite
- 8. Clumsy, uncoordinated, poor at sports
- 9. Smaller than peers
- 10. Physically weaker than peers

*A school nurse or other healthcare professional can determine if these physical symptoms might have other causes. A nurse can also gently question a child to learn if he or she is being bullied.

EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL

- 1. Sudden change in mood or behavior
- 2. Passive, timid, quiet, shy, sullen, withdrawn
- 3. Low or no self-confidence/self-esteem
- 4. Low or no assertiveness skills
- 5. Overly sensitive, cautious, clingy
- 6. Nervous, anxious, worried, fearful, insecure
- 7. Cries easily and/or often, becomes emotionally distraught, has extreme mood swings
- 8. Irritable, disruptive, aggressive, quick-tempered, fights back (but always loses)
- 9. Blames himself or herself for problems/difficulties
- 10. Overly concerned about personal safety; spends a lot of time and effort thinking/worrying about getting safely to and from lunch, the bathroom, lockers, through recess, etc.; avoids certain places at school
- 11. Talks about running away
- 12. Talks about suicide

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