Youth Protection
No Bullying In Scouting

Old North State Council
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How to Use This Booklet

The Old North State Council is committed to making Scouting in our council a Safe Haven for all who participate in our programs. Leaders and parents should be ever watchful and help to create a safe Scouting environment. Youth Protection policies and guidelines exist to keep our Scouts safe and bullying in any form is strictly prohibited. Bullying should not be considered just a part of growing up. Bullying takes a tremendous toll on those who are targets, on their friends and families, and even on the one bullying.

It is important for Scouts to understand about bullying and how to not only recognize it and report it, but to do their part in prevention. Having discussions with your Scouts can help them with understanding bullying and what their role can be in helping to prevent bullying and to help support friends who are targets.

This guide is designed to help unit leaders hold meaningful, age-appropriate discussions with your Scouts about how to recognize bullying behaviors, what they should do if they recognize that someone is being bullied, what to do if they have become a target, and how to do their part in prevention.

The information in the booklet will give leaders background information on bullying that you can use in holding your discussions. Use the open ended questions in the booklet to start your discussions and allow your Scouts to direct the discussion in a way that is non-threatening and will provide age-appropriate understanding of the issue of bullying. Rather than doing a presentation, hold discussions in dens for Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA patrols or troops, Venturing Scouts, Sea Scouts or Explorers in groups of 6 – 10, with an adult facilitator for each group. Smaller groups may help your Scouts feel more comfortable about participating in the discussions.

Younger Scouts will have a different level of understanding than older Scouts. Help them understand the “unhappy” feelings caused by bullying; allow your Scouts to openly discuss their thoughts and feelings while you help guide the discussion. Include their parents so they may continue the discussions at home.

You will find resources at the end of the booklet for additional reading and information.

Units holding discussions using the ONSC Youth Protection No Bullying in Scouting program will receive a special NO BULLYING patch for every Scout and adult participating in the program. Complete the form at the end of the booklet and submit as directed on the form.
Discussion 1: What is Bullying?

Ask your Scouts to describe what bullying is to them.

Ask your Scouts what they know about cyber bullying.

Help them understand what bullying is.

Bullying is a widespread problem in our society, but is not acceptable behavior and has no place in Scouting. “Bullying is a specific type of aggression in which (1) the behavior is intended to harm or disturb, (2) the behavior occurs repeatedly over time, and (3) there is an imbalance of power, with a more powerful person or group attacking a less powerful one.” (JAMA, Apr 25, 2001). Bullying may take on many forms, such as hitting, calling the target names, teasing in a negative way, taunting, threatening, spreading false rumors, or setting up an environment where the target will be rejected by peers or others in their circle.

Bullying is sometimes considered a normal part of peer interaction or growing up, but bullying is very harmful to the target and is never okay. Bullying can have long term, serious consequences for both the target and the bully, if it is not stopped.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014) noted that bullying, particularly among school-age children, is a major public health problem.” An estimated 160,000 children stay home from school every day because of being bullied at school and an estimated 10% of youth who drop out of school do so as a result of being bullied at school. (resilientchildren.wordpress.com, 2011)

Cyberbullying

As technology has continued to progress and more and more youth are using the internet and other technologies, a phenomenon known as “cyberbullying” has erupted. Cyberbullying involves online abuses and cruelty against others. Cyberbullying may take place in chatrooms, over social media such as Facebook and Twitter, through instant messages, through emails, or through text messages. The types of bullying behaviors are much the same as those in person, such as teasing, humiliation, harassment, threats, degrading information, digital images, coerciveness, false information being posted, etc., toward a target.
**Signs of Cyberbullying**

Some of the signs that might lead you to suspect someone is being cyberbullied include:

- Not using their computer or cell phone
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Signs of low self-esteem; depression; fear
- Poor school performance, truancy
- Sleeplessness; loss of appetite

Cyberbullying has much the same effects on the target as bullying in person. If you suspect cyberbullying, talk with the youth about your concerns. It is important to pay attention to the activities of our young people when using technology.

**Discussion 2: Ask your Scouts how wide spread they think bullying is.**

There are higher percentages of bullying among 6th through 8th graders than among older youth. Almost 30% of youth report some kind of bullying behavior, as the bully, the target, or as someone who is both. Males are more likely than females to bully. Boys are more likely to participate in physical aggression, while girls are more likely to use more indirect forms of bullying.

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<td>Name-calling</td>
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<td>Taking of personal belongings</td>
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About half of students report having witnessed bullying at school. About 15% of students who do not show up for school don’t attend because they are afraid of being bullied.

**Ask your Scouts why they think people bully and how they feel about those reasons. Use the common justifications below for continued discussion.**

“Because I see others doing it.”

“Because it’s what you do if you want to hang out with the right crowd.”

“Because it makes me feel stronger, smarter, or better than the person I’m bullying.”

“Because it’s one of the best ways to keep others from bullying me.”
**Discussion 3:** Ask your Scouts which points of the Scout Law are being violated when bullying is taking place?

*Talk about ways Scouts might help a fellow Scout stop bullying by helping them live by the Scout Law.*

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**Scout Law**

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**Discussion 4:** Discuss some of the character traits attributed to bullies. Ask your Scouts why they think people bully others.

Youth who bully have not learned the correct form of asking for attention, love, and support from others. Often, the family unit is unstable, with little closeness or parental and family support. These youth may also be receiving peer pressure to bully. Bullying is one way to gain some kind of control and to get attention. Bullies are usually older, bigger, and stronger than their targets.

Bullies have a higher than average risk of alcoholism and drug use, violence, truancy or dropping out of school, sexual promiscuity at an early age, and having issues with the law. Bullies may have been a target previously themselves or may be experiencing abuse at home.

Bullies may exhibit:

1. A need to have power or control over another; mean, violent, manipulative behaviors
2. An aggressive personality pattern
3. Anxiety, depression, low-self-esteem
4. A tendency to react aggressively in a variety of situations
5. An inability to control inhibitions against aggressiveness
6. A lack of empathy or conscience—they receive satisfaction from hurting others or causing suffering
7. A positive attitude toward violence
8. A defiant attitude toward authority; in trouble a lot
9. Quickness to blame others; will not accept responsibility for their actions
10. Manipulation of others to bully
11. Bullying on the order of another who promised some type of reward for bullying the target

Bullies tend to participate in a variety of risky behaviors:

- Fighting
- Vandalism
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse
- Promiscuity
- Criminal activity
- Abusive behaviors toward partners and their children as adults
Discussion 5: Ask your Scouts things they think would constitute bullying behavior. Discuss how bullying may negatively impact the target.

Bullying is more than just a teasing behavior. Teasing among friends or acquaintances is done in fun for all involved. When the “teasing” is not fun for all, and involves physical or emotional abuse, it is bullying.

Bullying may involve one or more of the following behaviors:

- Verbal, including derogatory comments and name calling
- Physical, including hitting, kicking, shoving
- Social isolation
- Spreading false rumors
- Stealing money or taking or damaging personal property
- Threatening, forcing to do things the target does not want to do

Bullying has a negative impact on everyone involved or aware of the bullying. Targets of bullying can have numerous, negative physical and emotional issues as a result of the bullying:

- Depression and anxiety
- Sleeplessness, nightmares
- Health complaints
- Sadness and loneliness
- Low self-esteem
- Embarrassment, shame, fear
- Self-blame
- Poor school performance
- Truancy or dropping out of school
- Reluctance to participate in activities
- Loss of interest in things they used to enjoy

Being bullied may lead a Scout to drop out of the program. Other signs to look for may include:

- Waits to go to the restroom until empty
- Nervous and afraid around the bully
- Increased, uncontrollable anger
- Reluctant to defend self
- Has bruises, cuts, or other injuries
- Talks about suicide

Targets may also take on bullying behaviors as a coping mechanism and begin bullying younger and weaker targets. Targets may also retaliate through violent behaviors.

Though bullying alone is not usually a cause of suicide among youth, youth who are bullied have a higher risk than average for suicide. Youth who have thoughts of suicide have issues in their lives that lead them to think of suicide such as depression, problems at home or at school, and emotional trauma, to name a few. Being bullied may be their tipping point to lead them to suicide.
Discussion 6: Ask your Scouts about how they might help a friend who is showing bullying behavior? The list below includes possible responses.

Help your Scouts understand that only an adult should council a bully about their behavior.

1. Help the Scout find alternatives to their bullying behavior and to understand that there are consequences to that behavior.
2. Hold them accountable for their behavior.
3. Help them understand bullying from the perspective of the target.
4. Recognize progress of the bully in changing their behavior.
5. Help the bully find ways to refocus their energies in positive ways.

Discussion 7: Discuss some of the typical personality traits of someone who may become a target. Use the list below to guide the discussion.

Young people who are perceived as different and weaker than their peers are at greater risk of being bullied. Bullying can happen anywhere, and may be effected by the environment of the group, whether the target has some type of disability, and whether the target is socially isolated.

Typical traits of targets:

1. Rarely report bullying because they think it will make the bullying worse
2. Don’t tell adults because they don’t think they can do anything about it
3. Being sensitive, insecure, or otherwise distressed
4. Relating better to adults than to peers
5. Being small, or large, for their age
6. Lacking social skills; are reluctant to participate in group activities
7. Being dependent on adults
8. Being isolated, with few friends
9. May have bruises, injuries, cuts, scratches, or torn clothing that does not have a reasonable explanation
10. Sometimes found to carry weapons to protect themselves

Bullying may also have a negative impact on those who witness it:

- More prone to smoke and abuse alcohol and/or drugs
- More prone to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety
- More truancy or dropping out of school
Discussion 8: Ask your Scouts what they think they can do, as a friend or classmate, to help someone who is a target of bullying? Discuss what they should you do if they become a target?

Youth who are being bullied can sometimes stop the bullying at a given time by simply saying in a calm, quiet voice: “You are bullying me and I want you to stop.” If the youth is not comfortable doing this, they should walk away and find an adult. Youth should not fight back, either verbally or physically. Targets should find an adult they feel they can trust to talk with about the bullying. This will help them to feel less isolated and together you may come up with a plan to stop the bullying. Have the target stay away from places the bully frequents.

We teach our Scouts to live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Instilling the core values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in our youth and helping them live by these guiding principles is a very powerful way to help the bully overcome their tendency and need to bully.

A Scout is loyal, friendly, courteous, kind—teach Scouts to be respectful of others.

- Encourage them to think before they say something to someone that may be hurtful.
- Teach them to redirect desires to be mean or physically violent toward someone into another activity, such as a game or talking to a friend.
- Encourage them to talk with a trusted adult who can help them find ways to treat others in a more positive way.
- Encourage bullies to apologize for their behavior.

As an adult leader, if you see bullying:

- Stop it immediately. Get between the bully and the target, but keep bystanders close at hand. Remain calm.
- Protect the target and the bully.
- Talk about the behavior, that bullying is unacceptable in the Scouting program and that it is in violation of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Provide support for the target and allow him time to reflect and regain some self-control. Talk with the Scout later if they are upset, but allow them to bring up what happened, if they choose. Increase supervision to avoid a repeat or escalation of the bullying.
- Get help if needed. Include bystanders in the conversation and in guiding them in how to appropriately handle any future incidents.
- If appropriate, provide consequences for Scouts who bully others, but do not require them to apologize or otherwise interact with the target. This typically does not improve the situation and can cause further upset to the target.
- Let the bully know they will be watched to be sure future incidents do not occur.
- If a Scout reports that they are being bullied, stay calm, be supportive, and just listen. It will have taken a lot of courage on their part to talk with you about what they are experiencing. Understand that a target has not asked to be bullied and do not lay blame on them. Listen carefully to what they have to say and document what they tell
you about the bullying incident(s). Let them know that bullying is not okay and that it is not their fault.

Only the Scout leader or Scout executive should contact the parents of the Scout who was doing the bullying. Follow up to be sure the bullying has stopped.

**Discussion 9: Talk with your Scouts about how to report bullying behavior in Scouting.**

**Explain to your Scouts that if they witness bullying in Scouting or are a target of bullying, they should tell a leader immediately, or as soon as possible.**

The Boy Scouts of America, and the Old North State Council, have a zero tolerance for bullying in our Scouting programs. All forms of bullying are prohibited in the Scouting program. Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse has “No Bullying” as one of its points for Youth Protection. “Verbal, physical, and cyber bullying are prohibited in Scouting.” *(Guide to Safe Scouting, 2014 printing.)* Though the chartered organization may deal with emotional abuse within the unit, acts of bullying should be reported to the Scout’s unit leader, and then the Scout executive.

Areas requiring an immediate report to local BSA council Scout executive:

- Any threat or use of a weapon
- Any negative behavior associated with race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability
- Any reports to authorities when BSA’s Mandatory Report of Child Abuse Policy applies
- Any abuse of a child that meets or exceeds state reporting mandates for bullying or harassment
- Any mention or threat of suicide or harm to self or others

If the Scout is being bullied because of their race, ethnicity, or disability, and local help is not working to solve the problem, contact Boy Scouts of America Scouts First Helpline at 844-726-8871.
Youth Protection Begins with You

It is the responsibility of every leader to ensure that Youth Protection policies and procedures are adhered to and that everyone participating in Scouting programs are kept safe from bullying or abuse in any form. This means adhering to the Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse.

If you have questions, any of the resources at the end of this booklet can provide you additional information.

www.Scouting.org/YouthProtection has a wealth of Scouting specific Youth Protection information, plus refer to the Guide to Safe Scouting for Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse.

At www.store.samhsa.gov/apps/bullyng you will find a phone app for iPhone or Android that provides information at your fingertips for starting an age-appropriate conversations with your Scouts.

Resources and Additional Reading:

http://www.stopbullying.gov
http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection/bullying.aspx
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2435211/
https://www.childwelfare.gov/calendar/cbconference/fourteenth/presentations/rosiak/sld060.cfm
http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/bullying-statistics-2010.html
http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/recognizing_bullying.page
http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/The_bully.pdf
http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/A_Scout_is_Kind_Newsletter.pdf


Suicide Prevention Hotline—1.800.273.8255

Published 2015
Revised 2020
To receive patches for completing the ONSC Youth Protection NO BULLYING in Scouting program, submit this form with the names of everyone who actively participated in the program to the Scout Service Center, Attention Nita Grubbs, or email to nita.grubbs@scouting.org.

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Youth Protection **No Bullying** in Scouting

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