

Tips to Protect Kids from Bullying During the Holidays and Into the New Year

Stand for the Silent, an organization helping to stop bullying, offering tips for a safer holiday season.

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-- With families gearing up for holiday break that will lead into the New Year, bullying may be the last thing on their minds. They may assume the risks of bullying will decline during this time, giving them a much-needed break from the issue. However, the research shows that isn't the case, as many kids are bullied when school is on break,

making it a great time to focus on what can be done to help prevent and address the situation now, during break and into the New Year when school resumes.



Photo courtesy of Stand For The Silent

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Kirk Smalley, co-founder of Stand for the Silent

"Unfortunately, bullying doesn't take a break when the schools do," says Kirk Smalley, co-founder of Stand for the Silent. "The good news is that there are things that can be done to help address it and prevent it from happening."

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), bullying is a type of violence that youth experience and it can happen in person and through technology. They report that it is widespread in America and causes harm. The more we can do to help prevent and address it during breaks and when school resumes, the better our youth will be.

Bullying in person takes place in school and during break, but youth are also subject to being bullied via technology during break, called cyberbullying. While they may use their technology devices all of the time, there is often an increase in usage during school breaks, making

cyberbullying more possible. According to the [National Center for Education Statistics](#), 22% of all youth ages 12-18 who report having been bullied experienced cyberbullying, either online or by text.

Here are some tips to help protect kids from bullying during the holidays and once they had back in the New Year:

- Prevention. Taking steps to prevent bullying in the first place is crucial. The CDC recommends teaching kids safe and effective ways to stand up against bullying and to enhance their interpersonal skills, such as empathy and conflict management.
- Get the community involved. Making anti-bullying a goal of the community will help strengthen the force against it. Communities can get involved by having a campaign, providing information to people about it, and raising awareness. Offer some examples of bullying and what can be done if and when they recognize it in the community.
- Create policies. Schools, winter break programs and camps, and other places where kids hang out during the breaks should have clear policies in place regarding bullying. They should also include the consequences if the policy is violated, and then immediate action should be taken when bullying takes place. The sooner it is addressed, the fewer incidents that are likely to occur.
- Focus on positivity. Many kids go to winter break camps and childcare centers during break. It's important for these places to instill a positive climate. The same goes for schools, which can focus on this prior to break and when school resumes in January.
- Make surfing safer. To help prevent online bullying, parents can take some measures that include managing online usage through a parental control app, setting screen time limits, blocking access to inappropriate content, etc. Kids should also be taught what cyberbullying is and what to do if they encounter it, such as blocking it, reporting it, and if need be, contacting the police.
- Watch for signs. Parents and caregivers should watch for the signs that a child is being bullied, whether online or in person. They include stopping using all technology devices, being secretive about being on their phone or computer, and losing interest in or avoiding usual activities.
- Asking open ended questions. Parents can gain information about if a child is being bullied by asking open ended questions and avoiding over-reacting to their responses. By supporting the child and validating their feelings they will help them gain trust in being able to report the issue.
- Get more info. Parents, teachers, and community members can get more valuable information on how to address bullying on all levels from Stand for the Silent. They offer a cyberbullying



Photo courtesy of Stand For The Silent

Stand for the Silent

handbook and additional tools.

"We are always happy and willing to help any school, community, or other entity to address the issue and help create a kinder environment," said Smalley

Stand for the Silent has several programs they provide to the public to help prevent and eliminate bullying in schools and communities nationwide. They travel the country, delivering eye-opening seminars to students and offering other programs. Smalley started the anti-bullying organization with his late wife, Laura, after their 11-year-old son committed suicide due to bullying. Having turned their pain and loss into a mission of helping others, he travels the country giving presentations about bullying, among other things. The mission is to help end bullying by raising awareness, sharing the facts, and offering solutions.

Their Student Stand Out program encourages teachers to nominate students who stand out, display excellent behavior, and lead by example. For more information about the Student Stand out program, visit the site at: <https://standforthesilent.org/schools/standout>

Stand for the Silent travels the country, giving presentations about bullying to schools, providing bullying prevention, giving out scholarships, offering intervention strategies, and more. Those interested in getting involved can start a chapter of the group in their area, obtain a free K-2 bullying prevention curriculum or cyberbullying handbook for parents, host a presentation at their school, introduce the How All Started video, and donate to help support the cause. To get more information, visit the site at: <https://standforthesilent.org/>

About Stand for the Silent

Started in 2010, Stand for the Silent is an organization on a mission to help eliminate bullying nationwide. Kirk and Laura Smalley founded the group after their child took his own life due to bullying. They offer free resources for parents and educators and travel to schools to host presentations. They have been to over 6,025 schools and spoken with more than 4.15 million students. To get more information, visit the site at: <https://standforthesilent.org/>

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