



Albemarle County Public Schools
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Dear Parent or Guardian:

Each fall since 2010, we have asked students in grades 4-12 to *voluntarily* make their school counselors aware of classmate(s) who may be victims of bullying. This Peer Support Nomination process is a vital piece of bullying prevention at our schools. We conduct the peer support nomination in the fall to reach students in need of support early, making help available to them throughout the school year.

Bullying is defined as the use of one's strength or popularity to injure, threaten or embarrass another person. Bullying can be physical, verbal or social, which can include cyberbullying.

- **Physical bullying** is when a student hits, kicks, grabs or shoves someone on purpose.
- **Verbal bullying** is when a student threatens or teases in a hurtful way.
- **Social bullying** is when a student tries to keep others from being friends with another student or from letting someone join in what others are doing.
- **Cyberbullying** is when a student threatens or teases, or spreads information that is private or embarrassing about another student using Facebook, the internet, a cell phone, or other electronic device.

Students are asked to use these definitions of bullying when they consider who may have been bullied at school during the past month. The Peer Support Nomination is administered by school staff and tabulated anonymously; students do not give their names and answers cannot be linked to a specific student. Once the names are gathered and tallied, counselors will meet with students who receive three or more nominations. Information is gathered during these interviews to determine whether a student is or has been the victim of bullying, is involved in conflict with a peer, or if none of the above is applicable.

By allowing students to name peers who they believe to be a target of bullying, we empower students to help stop bullying when they otherwise may not know what to do. We hope that the information and discussion shared in this process will help students more accurately understand AND report bullying victimization, so that students who are genuinely affected by bullying behavior will get the help they need and deserve.

We look forward to working with you and your student in enhancing the quality of relationships in our schools and the safety of our school communities.

Sincerely,

Nicholas J. King, Ph.D.
Student Services Officer

