

THE ECOSYSTEM OF BULLYING

When I was in junior high my 10-minute bus ride home felt like jungle combat in Vietnam. I never knew when the tough guys who ruled the back of the bus would decide I was the target-of-the-day. And the day it happened, I tried to outrun them by taking a back way home, bursting out of the bus door as soon as it stopped. But it didn't take long to catch me, and for a moment, I thought I was going to die—right there in the dirt next to a ditch, with three guys sitting on me and kicking me and making me promise...who knows what.

Today, bullies have expanded their palette to online combat environments, and the dynamics and reality of bullying are just as much a daily reality for students. The younger you are, the more likely you are to see bullying in your school—according to the non-profit Do Something foundation, four out of 10 freshmen (38 percent) see a bullying incident at least once a day, compared to a quarter (26 percent) of seniors. Overall, more than a quarter of all high schoolers (28 percent) are exposed to bullying every day. The older they are, the less likely they are to witness physical bullying (including name-calling and teasing)—instead, the battleground shifts to the digital world.

- **The bigger the school, the smaller the bullying problem.** Kids at schools with more than 2,000 students report less daily bullying than those who attend smaller schools (24 percent vs. 30 percent).

- **Male students** are a little more likely than female students to witness physical abuse (40 percent vs. 36 percent) and a little less likely to see emotional abuse (52 percent vs. 62 percent). But boys are more likely than girls to stand up for themselves against bullies (85 percent vs. 69 percent).
- **Female students** say the most common forms of bullying they experience are name-calling and spreading gossip (47 percent each). And three-quarters of them (78 percent) say their parents don't realize how big the problem is. About half of girls who admit they're bullies say they've seen their parents act like bullies—they're simply imitating the behavior. Almost a third of all girls (30 percent) say they've done things bullies do—gossip, name-calling, and teasing. And a huge number (69 percent) expect the impact of bullying to last their whole life.
- **Location matters.** Students in California report the lowest incidence of daily bullying—those in Appalachia and the Southeast report the highest levels.
- **Intervention is the best way to stop bullying,** say three-quarters of students (76 percent). Yet only a fraction (16 percent) say they "always" or "often" see others intervene, and half (51 percent) rarely or never see anyone do so. But no intervention has an impact on online bullying.

Where Kids Are Bullied In High School



BOYS		GIRLS	
Hallway	66%	Online	73%
Lunch/Cafeteria	59%	Hallway	70%
Online	59%	Lunch/Cafeteria	65%
Classroom	51%	Classroom	55%
Locker Room	40%	Via Phone (texting)	38%
Afterschool Activity	34%	School Bus	37%
School Bus	33%	Afterschool Activity	33%
Via Phone (texting)	26%	Locker Room	29%
Sporting Event	26%	Bathroom	27%
Bathroom	25%	Sporting Event	26%
Other	24%	Other	20%