

YOUTH SURVEY

FAIRFAX COUNTY

BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING AND HARASSMENT in Fairfax County

Self-reported by 8th, 10th and 12th grade students on the Fairfax County Youth Survey. Data from the Sixth Grade Youth Survey is reported separately and not included in totals.

6% of teens report bullying someone



46% report that someone said something bad about their race or culture



23% of teens report being bullied, taunted, ridiculed, or teased by a parent or adult in their home



14% of teens report being bullied



91% of teens have not been cyberbullied



What You Need to Know

In the Fairfax County Youth Survey, bullying is defined as any aggressive and unwanted behavior intended to harm, humiliate, or intimidate the victim; involves a power imbalance between the aggressor and victim; and is repeated over time.

In Fairfax County, bullying is more common in the middle school years, but overall 14% of 8th, 10th and 12th grade students report

being bullied in the past year. Sixth and eighth graders report the highest rates of bullying.

It is not unusual for a teen to be both an aggressor and a victim. Fifty-two percent of teens who report bullying others have also been a victim of bullying in the past year.

Boys (8%) report higher rates of bullying others than girls (4%) in the past year; however, girls report slightly higher rates

(15%) for being a victim of bullying than boys (13%).

Cyberbullying is bullying through email, text, social media, or other electronic means. Being cyberbullied by a classmate is reported by 8% of students surveyed. Victims of cyberbullying suffer from depression and substance abuse more than those who have not been cyberbullied.

What Can You Do?

BUILD BULLYING RESILIENCE

- ▶ Help kids understand bullying. Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely. Tell kids bullying is unacceptable. Encourage them to be more than a bystander, and to seek help if they or someone they know is being bullied.
- ▶ Know your kids' friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.
- ▶ Encourage kids to do what they love. Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help kids make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.
- ▶ Model how to treat others with kindness and respect.
- ▶ Make and enforce rules about phone and computer use.
- ▶ Discuss what is appropriate, be aware of where they are going online, and encourage them to tell you immediately if they observe bullying.

KNOW THE SIGNS

- ▶ Unexplainable injuries.
- ▶ Lost or destroyed possessions.
- ▶ Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness.
- ▶ Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating.
- ▶ Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- ▶ Declining interest and performance in school.
- ▶ Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations.
- ▶ Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem.
- ▶ Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves or talking about suicide.

Adapted from www.stopbullying.gov

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED

- ▶ Stop bullying on the spot. Respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior.
- ▶ Send the message that bullying is not acceptable.
- ▶ Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
- ▶ Listen without blaming, and don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
- ▶ Support all kids involved, including those engaging in bullying behavior and bystanders. Listen and focus on the child, and assure the child that bullying is not their fault. Use consequences to teach, and involve the child who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation.
- ▶ Engage your school counselor if the bullying is occurring at school.

Who Can Help?

Fairfax County Public Schools
Student Safety and Wellness Office
<http://bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs>
571-423-4270

Your child's school teacher, counselor, administrator, nurse, psychologist, or social worker

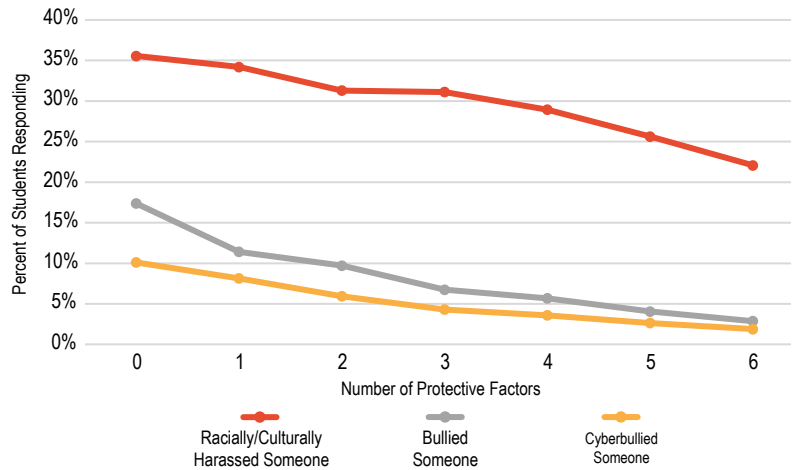
PRS CrisisLink 24-Hour Hotline
Call 703-527-4077 or text CONNECT to 855-11
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
800-273-TALK (8255)

3 THREE to SUCCEED

The Factors That Matter

Data from the Youth Survey reinforces decades of research that shows that when youth have protective factors (also known as assets) in their lives, they do better in lots of different areas. **Having just three protective factors dramatically reduces the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors.** The Youth Survey shows that every protective factor makes a difference.

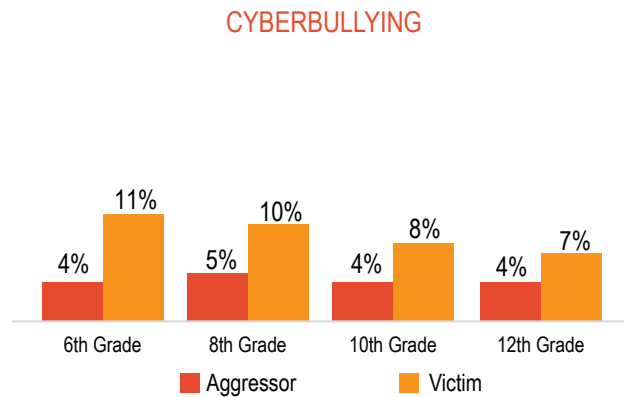
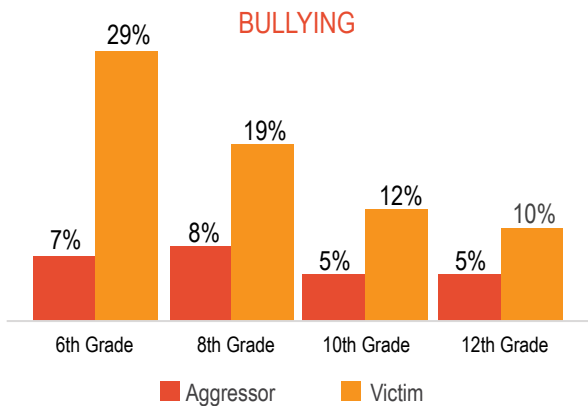
Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from the people and opportunities in their lives. Take action to be an asset in a young person's life and help to build a stronger, more positive community that benefits ALL children and youth.



Protective Factors

- Accepting responsibility for one's actions
- Having community adults to talk to
- Performing community service
- Participating in extra curricular activities
- Having teachers recognize good work
- Having parents available for help

Bullying by Grade



WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fairfax County Public Schools

<http://bit.ly/fcpsbullying>

Stop Bullying

www.stopbullying.gov

National Bullying Prevention Center

www.pacer.org/bullying

Fairfax County Youth Survey

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey

Fairfax County Prevention System

<http://bit.ly/FairfaxPrevention>

Related Factors

Fairfax County youth who report being victims of bullying are more likely to also report:

- Signs of depression.
- Considering or attempting suicide.
- Using drugs or alcohol.
- Carrying a weapon.

The definition of bullying and the response options were changed in the 2015 Youth Survey. Comparing data with data from years prior to 2015 is not advised. The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall of 2019.



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.



A Fairfax County, Va., publication
November 2020