IDENTIFYING STUDENTS STRICKEN BY BULLYING
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Bullying is one of the major problems that parents and educators are facing in this era. It happens when someone frightens, hurts, or threatens a smaller or weaker person to do something that is against his will. Bullying comes in different forms, these includes the following:

a. Physical bullying involves hitting, shoving, pushing, tripping, and other kinds of force.

b. Verbal bullying involves hurtful comments, name-calling, teasing.

c. Social bullying involves using relationships to hurt someone. It involves excluding or ostracizing someone from a friend group, spreading rumors, or “the silent treatment”.

d. Cyberbullying happens over cell phones or the internet.

Bullying affects students differently. The harm that it caused students is very alarming. Depression and anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy. These issues may persist into adulthood, health complaints, decreased academic achievement—GPA and standardized test scores—and school participation, and students are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school; these are the most common effects of bullying to a child.

According to Borba (2012), estimated 160,000 children skip school every day because of fear being attacked or intimidated by other students. Reports also confirm that bullying starts at younger ages and is more frequent and aggressive than before.

Parents and teachers must be aware of the signs that the child is being bullied inside and out of the classroom. Borba (2012) has identified 19 signs that could warn the adults that their child is a possible victim of bullying.

1. Unexplained physical marks, cuts, bruises and scrapes.
2. Unexplained loss of toys, school supplies, clothing, lunches, or money.
3. Clothes, toys, books, electronic items are damaged or missing or child reports mysteriously “losing” possessions.
4. Doesn’t want to go to school or other activities with peers.
5. Afraid of riding the school bus.
6. Afraid to be left alone: wants you there at dismissal, suddenly clingy.
7. Suddenly sullen, withdrawn, evasive; remarks about feeling lonely
8. Marked change in typical behavior or personality
9. Child appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed and that mood lasts with no known cause
10. Physical complaints; headaches, stomach aches, frequent visits the school nurse’s office
11. Difficulty sleeping, nightmares, cries self to sleep, bed wetting
12. Change in eating habits
13. Begins bullying siblings or younger kids (Bullied children can sometimes flip their role and become the bully.)
14. Waits to get home to use the bathroom. (School and park bathrooms, because they are often not adult-supervised, can be hot spots for bullying.)
15. Suddenly has fewer friends or doesn’t want to be with the “regular group”
16. Ravenous when he comes home. (Bullies can use extortion stealing a victim’s lunch money or lunch.)
17. Sudden and significant drop in grades. (Bullying can cause a child to have difficulty focusing and concentrating.)
18. Blames self for problems; feels “not good enough”
19. Talks about feeling helpless or about suicide; runs away

Parents must keep an eye to their children, study their body language. Bullied children are embarrassed to admit that they receive such treatment from peers that is why they won’t talk to their parents about it. Parents must build rapport to their children, stress that they are always there for their children. Emphasize that you believe with your child and you are always there for his sake.

If the signs continue, it is advisable to seek for the help of mental health professional to get your child out of misery of being bullied.

References: Merriam Webster
Michelle Borba, What’s happening in Character Education?
info.character.org