

HANDOUT: WARNING SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD MAY BE THE VICTIM OF BULLYING

Out of shame, fear of retaliation, or feelings of hopelessness, children who are bullied often don't tell anyone about their misery. In such cases, parents will want to know how to identify when their child is the target of a bully. Here is a list of warning signs.

- Subtle changes in behavior (withdrawn, anxious, preoccupied, loss of interest in school and in favorite activities)
- Arrives home with bruises and scratches, torn or dirtied clothing, missing or damaged books and property
- Loss of appetite
- Inability to sleep, bad dreams, crying in sleep
- Repeatedly loses clothing, money, or other valuables
- Appears afraid or reluctant to go to a specified activity, indicates he or she is sick
- Chooses a roundabout or strange route to and from the activity
- Feels lonely
- Sensitive or withdrawn when asked about his or her day
- Big appetite after school (perhaps because lunch or lunch money was taken)

Most children will not display every warning sign. Changes in a child's behavior can be a sign of victimization. When determining what action to take, consider the specific warning signs the child shows. How serious are the signs? How frequently do they occur? If you notice these warning signs, talk with your child or the adults involved in the activity causing the stress. Work with that adult to identify the bully and jointly form a positive plan of action so that your child feels that school or other places where activities are conducted are safe and supportive.