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## **Child Abuse Prevention Services Long Island Bullying Survey Finds Children Want More Adult Supervision in School**

**LONG ISLAND, NY:** The CAPS Bully Prevention Center—a division of Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS), Long Island's leading non-profit resource on bully prevention—polled 1,352 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade, public and private school students in Nassau and Suffolk, and found that children want to feel more protected in school. CAPS *2009-2010 Long Island Middle School Bullying Survey* showed that area schools fall within national ranges for bullying and cyber-bullying incidents. Anecdotally, respondents revealed a clear picture of their school experience and key areas of concern, and expressed they want more adult supervision and intervention, cameras installed in bullying hotspots, and stricter rules and punishment for bullies.

“Our survey focused on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders, since bullying behaviors typically peak during the middle school years,” said Alane Fagin, Executive Director of CAPS. “Developmentally, kids at this age start gravitating to their peer groups. The assumption has always been they want less adult supervision, but the students’ comments regarding bullying and cyber-bullying suggest the opposite.” Ten percent of those surveyed, and who felt compelled to respond to open-ended questions, said they want *‘more staff in high bullying areas,’* principals, teachers, hall monitors, bus drivers and lunch aides to *‘watch more carefully to see bullying,’* *‘cameras in secret places,’* and *‘punishments worse for the bullies.’*

Among the key results:

- 32% of students in Long Island middle schools experience recurring bullying; this is in line with the national average of 1 in 3 children per classroom
- 24% have been a victim of cyber-bullying
- Bullying hotspots include the hallways (57%), playground (42%), school bus (42%) and cafeteria (37%).
- Targeted students believe that physical appearance is the number one reason kids are bullied (22%)

***‘I need help. I’m being bullied in school and I don’t like it one bit.’***

Respondents expressed they are afraid to *‘tell anyone or get any help;’* even though they *‘try to stand up to bullies’* they are *‘too scared,’* and some are *‘afraid to come to school.’* *‘When there are no adults around, it is easier for bullies to bully.’* “No child should feel afraid to go to school,” said Fagin.

***‘Can you tell this kid to leave me alone.’***

According to the Survey, 2 out of 5 students who witness bullying said they “ignored it.” *‘It doesn’t make sense how some people see this and don’t do anything.’* “We clearly need to work more closely with the bystanders to encourage and engage the positive powers of peer support in bully prevention,” said Fagin. “Educators, parents, and all concerned members of the

community, must continue working first to prevent bullying incidents from occurring and, second, to encourage children to safely intervene when they do see bullying incidents taking place. A failure to invest in such efforts is nothing less than a breach of the trust Long Island's children place in those who claim to care about them."

### ***Cyber-Bullying is a Problem on Long Island***

The Survey queried students about the extent of cyber-bullying: mean, harassing emails, IMs, picture and text messaging, and social media sites. According to the CAPS Survey:

- 24% said they had been cyber-bullied
- Cyber-bullying occurred mostly via text messages, instant messaging and on Facebook

"In the past, children could find a safe haven at home, but today bullies pursue their victims any place the Internet or other electronic communications devices reach. This is something adults must take into account, when working to help keep kids safe from bullies," added Fagin.

CAPS offers bully prevention and Internet safety programs to Long Island public and private elementary, middle and high schools free of charge. Last year, CAPS volunteers presented these programs in more than 1,474 Nassau and Suffolk county classrooms, to 34,522 K-12 students.

Founded in 1982, Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS) is Long Island's leading non-profit resource on the prevention of bullying, child abuse and neglect. Its Bully Prevention Center was opened in September 2010 and centralizes the agency's in-school prevention-through-education programs for children, prevention workshops for parents, staff development and training for school professionals, Speakers Bureau and *Helpline and Bully Helpline* (inquiries to [helpline@capsli.org](mailto:helpline@capsli.org), [bullyhelpline@capsli.org](mailto:bullyhelpline@capsli.org) and 516-621-0552 x109—are answered by professionals with expertise in bullying and child safety issues).

CAPS is a 501(c)(3) organization underwritten by private donations and grants. Volunteers are urgently needed. For information call 516-621-0552 ext. 104, or to make a donation visit [www.capsli.org](http://www.capsli.org).

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