



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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When Going Back to School Also Means Going Back to Being Bullied

What to Do When Your Child Refuses to Go Back to School

ROSLYN, NY: While many children view the first day of a new school year with anticipation, there are many more who feel a deep apprehension—too frightened to go back to class and be at the mercy of school bullies.

“160,000 kids stay home from school each day, across the country, in fear of being bullied. Out of every class, two to three children spend their day afraid,” said Alane Fagin, MS, Executive Director, Child Abuse Prevention Services, Long Island’s leading nonprofit dedicated to the prevention of child abuse, peer harassment and neglect. Bullying can take many forms including physical, verbal and emotional abuse, social exclusion, intimidation, racial/ethnic slurs, sexual harassment and cyber-bullying.

“The new school year doesn’t have to be a source of angst for either child or parent,” said Ms. Fagin. “There are proven methods that parents can use to help their children feel safe in school, and “bully-proofing strategies” to keep them in control to better deal with difficult situations.

“What you say to your child largely depends on their age, but always start by listening. Speak to your child as soon as possible—don’t wait until the day before school to address the issue,” said Ms. Fagin.

I. Listen. If your child refuses to go to school:

1. Stay calm and listen
2. Say nothing to escalate their fears
3. Empathize
4. Keep it in perspective and don’t under or over react

II. Develop a Personal Safety Plan. Assure your child that you take their concerns seriously and will work with them to help them develop a plan so they can feel safe in school and get home safely. The plan should:

1. Identify adults in school they can turn to
2. Determine where the bullying took place and list alternative locations they can go to such as the guidance counselor’s office (some schools may already provide options to recess).
3. Identify their friends and encourage them to travel in groups

III. Teach your child CAPS’ self-protective strategies. If confronted by a bully:

1. Calm down
2. Leave
3. Enlist others
4. Assert yourself
5. Report incidents

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Page 2

Role play and practice specific responses with your child that they can use when feeling intimidated.

For your free copy of ***Bullying: What Parents Need to Know***, send a self-addressed stamped #10 envelope to: CAPS, PO Box 176, Roslyn, NY 11576.

CAPS offers a variety of prevention-through-education programs for parents, school professionals and students. Student-targeted, grade-specific multi-media workshops are free to all Long Island schools grades 2-12. Ask your child's school if they currently host CAPS' free classroom bully prevention and peer harassment workshops for students: *Steer Clear of Bullies™*, *Step Up and Speak Out™*, *Sexual Harassment Awareness and Prevention*, *SurfSafe! and What's Up? Girl Talk™*. Call 516-621-0552 if they'd like to schedule a class. A complete list of offerings can be viewed at www.capsli.org.

Founded in 1982, Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS) is Long Island's leading non-profit resource on the prevention of child abuse, peer harassment and neglect. For information on how to make a donation, schedule a class or volunteer, call 516-621-0552 or email speaktocaps@optonline.net

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