

Can Jonathan go to a different school if he feels threatened?

Maybe. Many schools can help students who don't feel safe transfer to other schools. Jonathan should speak to a teacher, guidance counselor, school administrator, or lawyer about what to do if he doesn't feel safe at school.

If a student is violently injured by another student on school grounds and this was reported to police, the student usually has the right to transfer to another school. All schools are required to have policies about "safety transfers."

Is bullying a crime?

Not always. But some things that count as bullying, like physical attacks and threats, are also crimes.

Can a student who is accused of bullying be suspended or expelled?

Yes, but this won't happen every time. Schools can use different options, including suspension and expulsion in certain cases, to make sure that bullying doesn't happen.

The information in this brochure is intended as reference only and should not be interpreted as legal advice in an individual case. If you need specific information about the law, please call 860-570-5327 or 203-223-8975.

Jonathan can't take it anymore.

He's tired of hearing kids at school call him "loser." He heard them talking about a Facebook page making fun of him. Last week, a kid at school threatened to hurt him for no reason.

Jonathan doesn't know what to do.

He doesn't want to be a snitch, but he hates going to school. The only person he told was his favorite teacher, but he asked her not to tell anyone.



Need Help?

At school, go to a teacher or any school staff to report bullying.

If you've reported bullying and don't think that your school is doing enough about it, call Joann Freiberg, School Climate and Bullying Consultant, Connecticut State Department of Education, at (860) 713-6598.

If you have questions about your legal rights, call the CCA Teen Legal Clinic at (860)570-5327 or (203)223-8975.



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What does the law say?

Is this bullying?

If another student or group of students repeatedly makes fun of, threatens, or embarrasses a student, the law calls this bullying. If it happens through texting, Facebook, or any internet site, that is called “cyberbullying.”

Here are some things that might be bullying if they happen more than once:

- Insulting the student or someone the student cares about
- Harassing the student sexually, or because of race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, or disability
- Embarrassing the student through pranks or jokes
- Threatening to hurt a student
- Asking a student to fight

These things count whether they happen in person, online, or in a text message.



If a student gets in a fight, is that considered bullying?

Not always. Connecticut law says that it has to happen to a student more than once. A fight could be caused by bullying, but a single fight isn’t always bullying.

Under the law, is Jonathan being bullied?

Think about if:

- Any of the things on the “is this bullying” list are happening
- Those things have happened more than once
- They are happening in school or affecting school

What can Jonathan do about it?

- Report it to any school employee. He can do this anonymously, which means that the school can’t let anyone know that he is the one who complained. The school has to investigate these reports, even if they are anonymous.
- Tell someone at school that he feels unsafe. Ask the school to give him or his parent/guardian a copy of their bullying policy. This will help him know what the school should be doing to protect him.
- His parent/guardian can file a written report with the school.

Because school staff are required to report bullying, the students involved may never know who reported it.

What does the school have to do when it gets a bullying report?

The school is required by law to deal with it. If bullying happens at school, on a school bus, at a school event, or if it affects the student at school, the law says the school has to:

- Investigate it
- Invite parents/guardians of all the students involved to at least one meeting at school
- Develop a plan to stop the bullying and to prevent it from happening again



Does Jonathan have to report it?

No. The law makes it easier for him to report it and requires that the school keep his report anonymous if that’s what he wants. But it doesn’t require him to report it if he doesn’t want to.

Can Jonathan’s friends or other students report it?

Yes. The school has to investigate reports from other students, even if they aren’t being bullied themselves. Students can also make anonymous reports.

Does his teacher have to report it?

Yes. School employees must make a verbal and written report whenever they learn about bullying.

What does the school have to do to prevent bullying?

All Connecticut schools are required to have a plan to keep the school safe, including preventing bullying.

The school also must have a person who investigates bullying reports, keeps records of bullying investigations, and is responsible for preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying.