

## Sample Email Responses to Parent Bullying Concerns

Communicating with parents about bullying can be especially challenging. Below is a template that can be used to respond clearly and quickly to parents' bullying concerns. Following the template are scenarios that reflect common parent concerns, some background information on the scenario, and an example of an administrator's appropriate response for each, using the template.

### Email Response Template

1. Thank the parents for contacting you, and affirm that they did the right thing.
2. Make them feel heard by interpreting what they told you and/or by responding with understanding directly to their concern(s).
3. Inform them what you have done and/or what your next steps will be to address the situation.
4. If applicable, refer them to any resources that would be helpful to them.
5. Wrap up with a statement that shows empathy.

### Sample Email Responses

#### Sample 1: Daughter Bullied in Hallway

**How can you help my daughter, who is being bullied in hallways, usually when there's no adult in sight?**

**Background information:** This is first time you've received a bullying report from this parent about her daughter. You have no other information about this situation.

Dear Parent:

Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention. You did the right thing by contacting me. I understand from what you are saying that your daughter is being bullied in locations where there is not obvious adult supervision. It is the school's responsibility to identify areas of the school where bullying is happening and increase supervision in those areas.

As an initial step, I have talked to your daughter's teacher. Starting tomorrow we will make sure that your daughter always has a friend or an adult to accompany her in the hallways. Specifically in your daughter's case, we will

want to talk to her and have her identify exactly when and where the bullying is happening and who is involved. If we find out she is being chronically bullied, we will set up an individual safety plan for her. Please see our anti-bullying policies and procedures, which include details about our student safety plan.

I understand how concerned you are for your daughter's safety. Please know that our students' safety is a top priority, and we will be doing everything we can to address your concerns.

Sincerely,  
Principal

#### Sample 2: Parents Want to Meet with Parents of Bullying Child

**Can you set up a meeting with the family of the child(ren) bullying my daughter so we can all talk and get the bullying to stop?**

**Background information:** You have talked with the teachers of both the student accused of bullying and the student being bullied. You need to follow up with both parties separately to get more information about what is possibly a real bullying situation.

Dear Parent:

Thank you for contacting me about this situation. You did the right thing by reporting the bullying to the school. I understand by what you are saying that you are committed to working together to solve this problem. However it is our policy not to bring together the families of the children. The best practice in bullying prevention is to work with the child being bullied and the child doing the bullying separately rather than face-to-face, so the child being bullied feels safe.

Therefore we will immediately start working with your daughter and your family separately from the child who is doing the bullying and his/her family. Please let me know your soonest availability to meet. Before our meeting, I encourage you to read our school and district's policies and procedures about investigating and responding to bullying.

I understand how concerned you are for your child's safety. I am confident that together we will be able to resolve this problem.

Sincerely,  
Principal

### Sample 3: Why Don't Teachers Do Anything?

**Why don't teachers do anything to stop the bullying in their classrooms, right under their noses?**

**Background information:** You have no other specifics about the bullying situation(s) from this parent.

Dear Parent:

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. Contacting me was the right thing to do. I understand from what you are saying that you are concerned that teachers are not doing enough to stop bullying in their classrooms. Teachers' focus and attention are pulled in several directions at any given time of the day. The fact is, sometimes teachers are just unaware of the bullying happening in their classrooms. That is why we need your help and your child's help in identifying bullying incidents that happen in the classroom and reporting them to either the teacher or school administrator.

All of our teachers are undergoing bullying prevention training. If we get reports that certain teachers are having difficulty managing or noticing the bullying in their classrooms, then we will give them the support they need to establish better classroom management strategies and make sure they are reminded of our school's policies and procedures about handling bullying at our school.

I would like to set a time to meet with you so we can discuss the specifics of the situation you are talking about. Please let me know times you are available this week. Before our meeting, I encourage you to read our school and district's policies and procedures about reporting, investigating, and responding bullying, as well as our training and prevention education efforts.

Thank you again for contacting me about this potentially unsafe situation. Our students' safety is our top priority!

Sincerely,  
Principal

### Sample 4: Daughter Is Being Excluded

**My daughter is always excluded from the group of girls in her class. What can you do to make sure she's included in the group and treated with more respect?**

**Background information:** You have talked with the teacher of the girls involved in this potential bullying situation about what she can do address these girls' behavior in the classroom.

Dear Parent:

Thank you for coming to us with your concerns about your daughter. Contacting the school was the right thing to do. I understand that you and your daughter are distressed that she is not being treated respectfully at school. Intentionally and repeatedly excluding someone is part of our school district's definition of bullying. However some children have a difficult time understanding that what they are doing is, in fact, bullying.

I have spoken to the classroom teacher to make sure the girls doing the bullying understand that their behavior is not acceptable and that if it continues, there will be consequences. We will also make sure students have the opportunity to learn and practice positive social skills, including skills for including others. If you and your daughter would like, I will arrange for her to get some individual help with friendship-making skills or help in finding more compassionate friends.

I encourage you to read our policies and procedures for handling conflict and defining, investigating, and responding to bullying. [Link to policies and procedures.] Please know that we are doing everything possible to create a safe and respectful learning environment for your daughter and the other students in our school.

Sincerely,  
Principal

**Sample 5: Son Bullied on Playground**

**My 11-year-old son is always last to be picked on a team, and he gets teased and taunted on the playground. He feels sick and stressed at home and doesn't want to go to school. You've got to help me. What are you going to do to stop this?**

**Background information:** You have done an environmental scan of the playground and have determined that increased supervision is necessary. You plan to speak with the P.E. teacher about things she can do to address and prevent bullying among students. You've also talked with the school counselor about helping this particular student.

Dear Parent:

Thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention. You did the right thing by contacting me. I know how upsetting it can be when your child is having difficulties at school. It is my job to make sure that your child has every opportunity to be safe and thrive here at our school.

To that end, we have increased supervision on the playground. I will also talk to our P.E. teacher to ask her to help teach our students games that are more cooperative and don't have processes that humiliate children, like choosing sides for teams. If you and your son are interested, we will provide one-on-one counselor attention to help your son learn and practice assertive communication and friendship-making skills.

I encourage you to read our policies and procedures for investigating and responding to bullying. [Link to policies and procedures.] Please know that we are doing everything possible to create a safe and respectful environment for your son and the other students in our school.

Sincerely,  
Principal

**Sample 6: Other Parents Think My Child Is Bullying**

**Other parents have told me that my son is bullying his classmates at recess. I just don't understand. My child is sweet and good-natured. I feel like he is being stereotyped, and now the other moms don't want to set up play dates with my child. Are you looking into this? I know my child is not a bully. It must be the other children. I'm going to call their parents.**

**Background information:** You know this student, and you've talked with his teacher and the playground supervisor. You are aware he may be guilty of some of the bullying he is accused of.

Dear Parent:

Thank you for coming to the school first with your concerns. You did the right thing by contacting me. I understand from what you are telling me that that you are concerned for your child. It is difficult for many parents to accept that their child is bullying or has been involved in bullying incidents. We want you to know that it is not uncommon for children to try out certain behaviors, but it is our job as adults to help guide them away from those behaviors that hurt others and ultimately hurt themselves.

Please be assured that we are doing a thorough investigation of the bullying reports and will give the appropriate support to both the children doing the bullying and the children who are bullied. We will immediately begin working together to see the problem resolved, so your child is safe and not at risk for negative outcomes. Please see the link on our website to read statistics about the negative life outcomes for children who fall into chronic patterns of bullying others. [Link to website.]

I also encourage you to read our policies and procedures for handling conflict and defining, investigating, and responding to bullying. [Link to policies and procedures.]

We are wholly invested in making sure that your child has the support and guidance he needs to lead a happy, safe, and successful life.

Sincerely,  
Principal

### Sample 7: Bullying or Conflict Between Two Students

The teacher told me in my teacher-parent conference that my son Charlie is bullying Sam. I know Sam, and he's probably instigating the fights. Charlie would never do anything to hurt someone. You need to tell the teacher to look at what's really going on here. Who was there to see the bullying? Do you or the teacher have any witnesses? And now that my child had been accused of bullying, what are you going to do about it?

**Background information:** You've talked with Charlie and Sam's classroom teacher. You know these two students. It is possible that both students are exhibiting aggression toward one another.

Dear Parent:

Thank you for bringing this issue to my attention. Contacting me was the right thing to do. I understand from what you are telling me that you are concerned that your son is being falsely accused.

We will go through our standard procedure for investigating this report, which will include interviewing teachers and student witnesses. If your son and Sam are involved in "fights," that's different from bullying. Conflict is still a problem that needs to be dealt with, but it is different from how we deal with bullying. Our teachers are trained to recognize the difference between bullying and conflict and how to report bullying when they are aware of it. They are also trained to help children effectively use a conflict resolution model. I encourage you to read our policies and procedures for handling conflict and defining, investigating, and responding to bullying. [Link to policies and procedures.]

Please know that we are doing everything possible to create a safe and respectful environment for your son and the other students in our school. The safety of your child is our priority.

Sincerely,  
Principal

### Sample 8: Parent Threat to Notify Media About Bullying

I've spoken to you before about my son being bullied on the playground. He came home this afternoon crying, with a bloody nose. If this happens again, I'm going to call television and newspaper reporters and tell them that my son goes to a violent school and you're not doing anything to make it better.

**Background information:** You thought you had adequately addressed this situation the first time it occurred. You had no idea until you received this email that the bullying problem was not resolved.

Dear Parent:

Thank you for your persistence in bringing this issue to my attention. You did the right thing by contacting me again. I appreciate your concern for your son's safety and for notifying me again of this continued problem, because we are often unaware a problem is persisting unless we are notified.

We are in the process of increasing supervision on the playground. We will create a safety plan for your son that will include increased adult supervision and scheduled check-ins with your son to ensure his continued safety.

I encourage you to read our policies and procedures for handling conflict and defining, investigating, and responding to bullying. The media is welcome to view this information as well. [Link to policies and procedures.]

Please know that your son's safety is a top priority, and we will be doing everything we can to resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,  
Principal