

Bullying in Eldorado Schools is a Lingering Problem

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Bullying in schools is a serious problem in many communities, especially in Eldorado Park. Many learners feel unsafe at school, which affects their ability to focus on their studies. Some learners eventually drop out, contributing to lower pass rates.

The causes of bullying often go beyond the school environment. Problems at home, such as gender-based violence, substance abuse, unemployment, and overcrowding, can shape children's behaviour. Some children experience verbal or physical abuse at home, which could affect self-esteem and emotional well-being. In some cases, this trauma leads to anger, aggression, or withdrawal from others. Mental health can also happen, and in extreme situations, it may lead to depression or suicidal thoughts.

Peer pressure is another factor. Some learners bully others to impress their friends or gain acceptance in certain social circles. In many cases, children who bully others have themselves been exposed to trauma at an early age.

Bullying can take different forms. Physical bullying includes fighting and physical intimidation. Emotional bullying involves name-calling and humiliation that damages a learner's confidence and self-respect. Cyberbullying takes place on social media platforms, where harmful messages or images can spread quickly. There are also forms such as sexual bullying and racist bullying, where learners are targeted because of their identity.

A Grade 10 learner at Silver Oaks High, Jade Phillips, described the fear he experiences at school. He says a group of boys regularly call him out during lunch breaks. They take his lunch and pocket money and threaten him if he reports the incidents to teachers.

Jade's mother, Daphne Phillips, who is in her 40s, eventually removed him from school and placed him in homeschooling because she feared for his safety. This option is costly for many families.

Addressing bullying demands cooperation between schools, families, and communities. Parents should build open and supportive relationships with their children so that they feel safe to speak about their problems.

Schools can also introduce anti-bullying campaigns as part of the curriculum. Communities can support these efforts by helping to monitor school environments and promoting respectful behaviour among young people.

Preventing bullying requires a collective effort to build safe spaces where learners can grow, study and develop with dignity.

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