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Many kids feel threatened in the classroom

NOVEMBER 22, 2009

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Study: Bullying Doesn't Stop After Recess Ends

It is often assumed the schoolyard is where bullies go to make other kids miserable, but a new study suggests classrooms are another popular site.

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The study, presented recently at the American Public Health Association's annual meeting in Philadelphia, is based on survey results from more than 10,000 middle-school students who anonymously answered questions online.

Of those surveyed, 43 percent said they'd been physically bullied within the last month. A bit more than half said they'd been teased in an unfriendly way, and half reported being called hurtful names.

About one-third said groups had excluded them to hurt their feelings. Twenty-eight percent said their belongings had been taken or broken; 21 percent said someone threatened to hurt them.

According to the results, two-thirds of the students said they'd been bullied in more than one way over the previous month.

The study authors noted 8 percent of respondents said they'd skipped school at least once during the school year because of fear of being bullied. Twenty-five percent said they'd taken other actions, such as skipping recess, not going to the bathroom or lunch, skipping classes, or avoiding some area of the school to avoid encountering a bully.

Bullies did much of their intimidating in the classroom, lunchroom and school hallways, the researchers found. Those who were bullied in the classroom felt more threatened and unsafe on campus than other students.

"These findings show that it is erroneous to think of the classroom as a safe haven from bullying and to think that more remote or less-monitored areas of school are necessarily the greatest risk for students," H. Wesley Perkins, lead researcher on the study, said in a news release.

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