



# School Safety Newsletter

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## Kids Do A Lot Better When Schools Ban Smartphones

CNN, May 18, 2015

<http://money.cnn.com/2015/05/18/technology/smartphones-schools-ban/index.html>



Do you want your children to do better in exams? Then take away their smartphones. (Sorry, kids!)

Schools that ban students from carrying phones see a clear improvement in their test scores, according to a study by the London School of Economics.

"We found the impact of banning phones for these students equivalent to an additional hour a week in school, or to increasing the school

year by five days," researchers Richard Murphy and Louis-Philippe Beland said.

The authors looked at how phone policies at 91 schools in England have changed since 2001, and compared that data with results achieved in national exams taken at the age of 16. The study covered 130,000 pupils.

It found that following a ban on phone use, the schools' test scores improved by 6.4%. The impact on underachieving students was much more significant -- their average test scores rose by 14%.

"The results suggest that low-achieving students are more likely to be distracted by the presence of mobile phones, while high achievers can focus in the classroom regardless of the mobile phone policy," the economists said.

Murphy and Beland said their study doesn't mean phones and other technology can't be used to boost learning.

"There are, however, potential drawbacks to new technologies," they said, citing the temptation to text, play games or chat on social media.

The use of mobile phones in schools is an explosive topic, with parents wanting to be able to reach their children and teachers complaining about disruptions.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio lifted a decade long ban on cell phones in schools in March, leaving it up to each school to set their own rules on phone use.

But Murphy and Beland said the decision may backfire.

"Schools could significantly reduce the education achievement gap by prohibiting mobile phone use in schools, and so by allowing phones in schools, New York may unintentionally increase the inequalities of outcomes."

*Protecting our  
future through  
information  
sharing*

### In This Issue

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# School Bullying, Cyberbullying Continue to Drop

US News, May 15, 2015

<http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2015/05/15/school-bullying-cyber-bullying-continue-to-drop>

The percentage of students who reported being bullied or cyberbullied reached a record low in 2013, but female students are still victimized at higher rates, according to new data from the Department of Education.

The department released the results of the latest School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey, which showed that in 2013, the percentage of students ages 12-18 who reported being bullied dropped to 21.5 percent. That's down from 27.8 percent in 2011, and a high of 31.7 percent in 2007. The percentage of students who reported being cyberbullied also fell to 6.9 percent in 2013, down from 9 percent in 2011.

"As schools become safer, students are better able to thrive academically and socially," Education Secretary Arne Duncan said in a statement. "Even though we've come a long way over the past few years in educating the public about the health and educational impacts that bullying can have on students, we still have more work to do to ensure the safety of our nation's children."

Despite the overall drop in bullying and cyberbullying, reporting rates remain low – just more than one-third of students who were victims of traditional bullying and fewer than one-quarter of cyberbullying victims reported the incident to an adult, the data show.

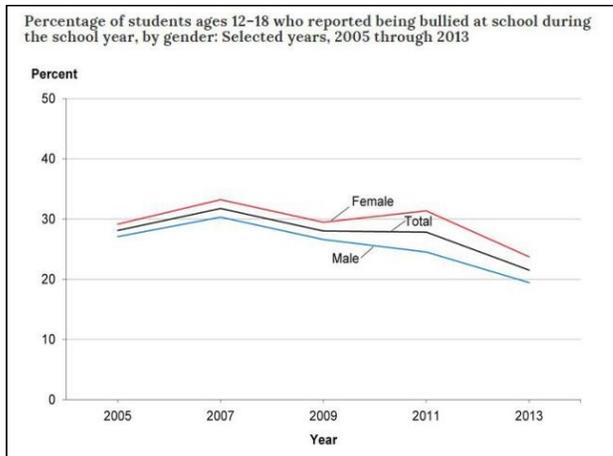
Female students also still consistently experience higher-than-average rates of victimization – 23.7 percent of female students said they had been bullied in 2013, and 8.6 percent said they had been cyberbullied. By comparison, 19.5 percent and 5.2 percent of male students in 2013 said they had been bullied and cyberbullied, respectively.

While there aren't noticeable gender gaps in the location of bullying, female students were significantly more likely than male students to be made fun of, called names or insulted (14.7 percent compared with 12.6 percent), to be the subject of rumors (17 percent compared with 9.6 percent) and to be excluded from activities on purpose (5.5 percent compared with 3.5 percent).

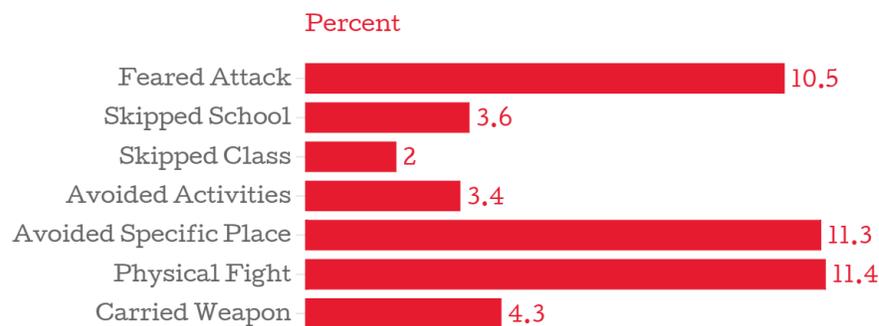
Male students who were bullied were more likely than female students to be pushed, shoved, tripped or spit on (7.4 percent compared with 4.6 percent).

Overall, bullied students were most likely to be made fun of, called names or insulted (13.6 percent) or to be the subject of rumors (13.2 percent). The most common forms of cyberbullying were unwanted contact via text messaging and posting hurtful information on the Internet.

Among students who were cyberbullied, female students were more likely to have hurtful information about them posted on the Internet (4.5 percent compared with 1.2 percent), to receive unwanted contact via instant messaging (3.4 percent compared with 1 percent) and unwanted contact via text messaging (4.9 percent compared with 1.6 percent).



## Behavior of Bullied Students



USNews

Allie Bidwell for USN&WR; Source: U.S. Department of Education

## Behavior of Cyber-Bullied Students



USNews

Allie Bidwell for USN&WR; Source: U.S. Department of Education

Monthly  
Webinars!

First  
Wednesday of  
Every Month  
at 10 am.

Next Webinar  
- August 12,  
2015

Each webinar  
has a round table  
discussion at the  
end. Questions  
are always  
welcome!

To participate, you  
must be a vetted  
member. For more  
information please  
email  
schoolsafety@isp.  
state.il.us

## **Teacher Sues Oregon School District for Traumatic Active –Shooter Drill**

NBC News, April 21, 2015

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/teacher-sues-oregon-elementary-school-traumatic-active-shooter-drill-n345631>

When a goggle-wearing gunman burst into her classroom two years ago, teacher Linda McLean wondered if she was going to die. She remembered her grandchildren and the one on the way. That's when she noticed a pistol on the floor outside her classroom and wondered if she should pick it up and go after the man in black who had just pointed a gun in her face, pulled the trigger and told her she was dead.

But she wasn't dead. She wasn't even bleeding. And a short time later, McLean, 56, and other teachers were gathered in the library of their Oregon elementary school, being debriefed on how they reacted. That is McLean's version of what happened during a simulated school shooting at Pine Eagle Charter School in Halfway, Oregon, in April 2013, according to a newly filed federal lawsuit.

Yet she was never warned that it was a just drill — one that came just four months after the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut — the suit claims. Citing emotional distress, McLean is suing the school district, the principal, several members of the school board and Alpine Alarm Communications and Construction LLC. Alpine constructed, installed and maintained the school's security system, according to Oregon Live. McLean is also suing the man she says pointed the gun in her face — Shawn Thatcher, who happened to be the school's safety supervisor.

The teacher, who had worked at the school more than three decades, says she has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and has not been able to set foot back in the school since the incident. She also says she has been ostracized in the small community of 288 people for speaking out about what happened.

Now she's seeking lost wages, medical costs and punitive damages. The suit was filed Friday in federal court in Portland. And McLean claims she's not the only one that was traumatized by the drill: One teacher wet herself, and another hurt his arm trying to keep one of the "gunmen" out of his classroom, according to the lawsuit.

John Minarich, the vice chair of the district's school board and the owner of Alpine Alarms, was also stalking the hallways that day with an unloaded gun, the suit says.

McLean and her lawyer did not immediately return a call from NBC News. Emails to each defendant still employed at Pine Eagle Charter School went unanswered. William Johnson, a defendant and former school board member, said he couldn't immediately talk. Kelly Dennis, a secretary at the school, told NBC News that the school has been advised not to comment on the pending litigation.

## **Police: Bomb Threat and Bank Robbery Connected**

WISHTV, March 17, 2015

<http://wishtv.com/2015/03/17/police-bomb-threat-and-bank-robbery-connected/>

FORTVILLE, Ind. (WISH) – Police say two crimes that happened in the same day might now be connected. The first was a bomb threat called into Mt. Vernon High School. Less than an hour later, the Greenfield Bank Co. was robbed. It's about two miles from the school. Police originally thought the crimes were a coincidence, but a break in the bomb threat case changed that.

Outside of the wind and a warm welcome, you might not hear too much happening in Fortville. "This community is really quiet," said Mike Hobbs. "We hardly have anything going on." But that wasn't the case last week. "We got alerts on our phones saying there was a bomb threat," said Hobbs. He has two sons who attend Mt. Vernon High School. "We got a notification through our instant alert message," said Jenny Humrickhouse, a teacher at neighboring Fortville Elementary.

Law enforcement agencies from all around Fortville swarmed the high school and luckily found no threat. But while they were busy investigating, the Greenfield Bank Co., about two miles away, was being robbed. Surveillance video there showed a man wearing a fake beard. Police said he handed the teller a note demanding money before making off with some cash.

The timing of the two crimes at first seemed coincidental until police traced the bomb threat call to a pay phone at a Speedway gas station in Anderson. They checked surveillance video inside and found a man at the gas station counter minutes before the call was made. He was wearing a sweatshirt that matched the robbery suspect. But that wasn't the only similarity.

"It's very coincidental that the person of interest was wearing the exact same clothing down to the pants, the belt, the tears in the jeans, the tennis shoes," said Lt. Patrick Bratton, Fortville Police Department. "It's very distinct in both pictures." We showed the two pictures to Hobbs and Humrickhouse. Both immediately picked up on the similarities. "Definitely wearing the same sweatshirt," said Humrickhouse. "The face looks pretty similar," added Hobbs. The only clear difference was the fake facial hair. "Yeah, Duck Dynasty beard," joked Humrickhouse.

Police won't pin the crime on the beardless man right away. They just want to question him. But if you ask people around town, they feel the connection is right on the money. "I kind of thought, maybe they were related to draw everybody at (the high school) so nobody would be in town," said Hobbs.

"It would be a good diversion," said Humrickhouse of the bomb threat. "Bring the police all out and then to distract them."



## Resilience Guide for Parents and Teachers

American Psychological Association, <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/resilience.aspx>

We tend to idealize childhood as a carefree time, but youth alone offers no shield against the emotional hurts and traumas many children face. Children can be asked to deal with problems ranging from adapting to a new classroom to bullying by classmates or even abuse at home. Add to that the uncertainties that are part of growing up, and childhood can be anything but carefree. The ability to thrive despite these challenges arises from the skills of resilience. The good news is that resilience skills can be learned.

Building resilience — the ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress — can help our children manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. However, being resilient does not mean that children won't experience difficulty or distress. Emotional pain and sadness are common when we have suffered major trauma or personal loss, or even when we hear of someone else's loss or trauma.

We all can develop resilience, and we can help our children develop it as well. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned over time. Following are 10 tips to building resilience in children and teens:

1. **Make connections** Teach your child how to make friends, including the skill of empathy, or feeling another's pain. Encourage your child to be a friend in order to get friends. Build a strong family network to support your child through his or her inevitable disappointments and hurts. At school, watch to make sure that one child is not being isolated. Connecting with people provides social support and strengthens resilience. Some find comfort in connecting with a higher power, whether through organized religion or privately and you may wish to introduce your child to your own traditions of worship.
2. **Help your child by having him or her help others** Children who may feel helpless can be empowered by helping others. Engage your child in age-appropriate volunteer work, or ask for assistance yourself with some task that he or she can master. At school, brainstorm with children about ways they can help others.
3. **Maintain a daily routine** Sticking to a routine can be comforting to children, especially younger children who crave structure in their lives. Encourage your child to develop his or her own routines.
4. **Take a break** While it is important to stick to routines, endlessly worrying can be counter-productive. Teach your child how to focus on something besides what's worrying him. Be aware of what your child is exposed to that can be troubling, whether it be news, the Internet or overheard conversations, and make sure your child takes a break from those things if they trouble her. Although schools are being held accountable for performance on standardized tests, build in unstructured time during the school day to allow children to be creative.
5. **Teach your child self-care** Make yourself a good example, and teach your child the importance of making time to eat properly, exercise and rest. Make sure your child has time to have fun, and make sure that your child hasn't scheduled every moment of his or her life with no "down time" to relax. Caring for oneself and even having fun will help your child stay balanced and better deal with stressful times.
6. **Move toward your goals** Teach your child to set reasonable goals and then to move toward them one step at a time. Moving toward that goal — even if it's a tiny step — and receiving praise for doing so will focus your child on what he or she has accomplished rather than on what hasn't been accomplished, and can help build the resilience to move forward in the face of challenges. At school, break down large assignments into small, achievable goals for younger children, and for older children, acknowledge accomplishments on the way to larger goals.
7. **Nurture a positive self-view** Help your child remember ways that he or she has successfully handled hardships in the past and then help him understand that these past challenges help him build the strength to handle future challenges. Help your child learn to trust himself to solve problems and make appropriate decisions. Teach your child to see the humor in life, and the ability to laugh at one's self. At school, help children see how their individual accomplishments contribute to the wellbeing of the class as a whole.
8. **Keep things in perspective and maintain a hopeful outlook** Even when your child is facing very painful events, help him look at the situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Although your child may be too young to consider a long-term look on his own, help him or her see that there is a future beyond the current situation and that the future can be good. An optimistic and positive outlook enables your child to see the good things in life and keep going even in the hardest times. In school, use history to show that life moves on after bad events.
9. **Look for opportunities for self-discovery** Tough times are often the times when children learn the most about themselves. Help your child take a look at how whatever he is facing can teach him "what he is made of." At school, consider leading discussions of what each student has learned after facing down a tough situation.
10. **Accept that change is part of living** Change often can be scary for children and teens. Help your child see that change is part of life and new goals can replace goals that have become unattainable. In school, point out how students have changed as they moved up in grade levels and discuss how that change has had an impact on the students.

### School Safety Newsletter

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