

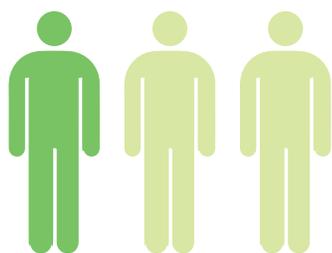
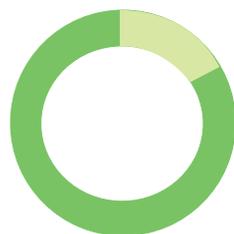
WHAT REALLY IS BULLYING?

Since the implementation of the Bully Referral website, East has seen an increase in “joke” reports on the site which leaves students and administrators questioning bullying reports

bullying *breakdown*

#1 most common types of bullying are verbal bullying and social bullying

approximately 30 percent of young people admitted to bullying others in a survey



1 in 3 students in the U.S. say that they have been bullied in school

23 percent of females reported bullying at school while only 19 percent of males reported any bullying



School-based bullying prevention programs can decrease bullying by up to 25 percent

by **natasha thomas**

Then-senior Molly Blake definitely messed up.

Her classmates were playing the Assassins game — a tradition where seniors are assigned other seniors to shoot with water guns to get them out of the game — and she did the one thing you don't do during that sacred high school tradition. Blake told a fellow assassin where she thought their target might be hiding, and she was right.

Blake messed up, but she didn't think she deserved what followed.

The girl who Blake got “murdered” created a group chat with some of Blake's friends and other seniors — named the “F*** Blake Club”. And this was just the first “retaliation”.

One morning Blake walked outside to see what someone had come to her house and done in the night. Swastikas, racist comments and inappropriate pictures were scrawled on her car.

That was 3 years ago, and Blake still feels that the administration never did anything about the situation.

When the administration receives a report of bullying, the report is sent to a team of administration that decides if the referral warrants action. Each referral is reviewed and a plan of action is created

“

I didn't use bully referral because when I was at East people treated bully referral as a joke. They'd report made up stuff just for fun so I assumed whoever got the referrals would think mine was a joke too.

molly blake

to combat the issue presented.

However, ‘Report Bullying’, the system installed in SMSD student's MacBooks that allows anonymous bully reports, is frequently misused. Bully reports that are clearly fake and jokes on the site give the system a bad image, leaving it underutilized and bullying incidents left unresolved.

Blake told her teachers and counselors about what happened, but she didn't report it as bullying.

“I didn't use bully referral because when I was at East people treated bully referral as a joke.” Blake said. “They'd report made up stuff just for fun so I assumed whoever got the referrals would think mine was a joke too.”

Despite views like Blake's, Assistant Principal Britton Haney says ‘Report Bullying’ has resolved many cases of bullying or conflict among East kids.

But the system has also given Blake a reason to doubt it's authority.

When the system was first introduced to SMSD five years ago, it was joked about or used to make a fake referral 90 percent of the time, according to sophomore Phoebe Hendon.

“It's good that teachers and administration want to help give kids a way to report any incidents, but somewhere along the line the site just became inane,” Hendon said.

Assistant Principal Britton Haney acknowledges the stigma around ‘Report Bullying’, and realizes

bully referral

noun The pre-installed application on student computers that allow them to anonymously report bullying.

they may get only one serious situation for every 20 reported. But he hopes the students that actually get bullied look to the administration for help — the administration still follows up on every single report.

In a poll taken of 162 East students, 105 have seen someone bully or be bullied. Less than 15 percent of those 105 have reported a bullying incident to the administration.

Some students, like senior Lydia Arnold, reported incidents in the past but stopped when nothing changed after filing a report.

When Arnold was riding the bus, she was told by a peer that she needed to wear a binder because of her bra size. Arnold reported it, but felt that the incident warranted more than the small talk the administration had with her bully.

“I think she just got a slap on the wrist,” said Arnold, “Nothing really happened because it was basically someone saying ‘this person's making me uncomfortable, please talk to her.’”

Arnold doesn't ride the bus anymore, and she doesn't use the ‘Report Bullying’ system, either.

Haney says there are times when the administration can't intervene.

“If a group of people are Instagramming something bad outside of school, there isn't a whole lot we can do” said Haney.

Sometimes the administration's only option is to notify the families of those involved in a conflict and hope it is resolved amongst themselves.

And if the report is fake? The bully report system gets wasted on interviewing people that were never involved in bullying.

“Some students don't think it's a serious tool,” said Haney, “But hopefully those students will use it if they find themselves in need of some support in the future.”