

IS IT BULLYING?

When someone says or does something *unintentionally* hurtful and they do it once, that's

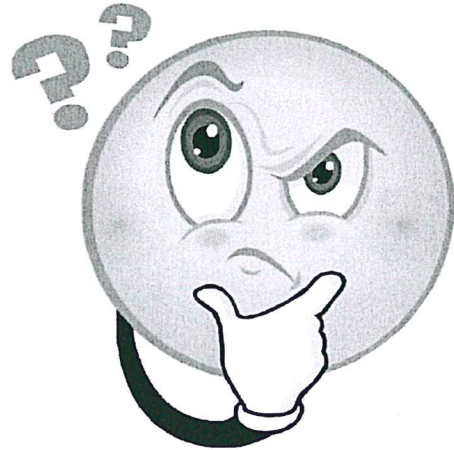
RUDE.

When someone says or does something that is *intentionally* hurtful and they do it once, that's

MEAN.

When someone says or does something that is *intentionally* hurtful and *they keep doing it* - even when you tell them to stop or show them that you are upset - that is

BULLYING.



BEFORE YOU SPEAK

- T** Is it **TRUE?**
Is this a fact, an opinion or a feeling? Know which it is and be clear before you speak.
- H** Is it **HELPFUL?**
Do your words help you or others in this situation?
- I** Is it **INSPIRING?**
Do your words **IMPROVE** on the silence?
- N** Is it **NECESSARY?**
Would these words be better left unsaid?
- K** Is it **KIND?**
Why are you saying these words?

Information for Parents About Bullying

(From *"Bullying – we can all help stop it. A guide for parents of elementary and secondary school students."* found at ontario.ca)

The effects of bullying go beyond the schoolyard. As a parent or guardian, here's what to watch for, what you can do, and where you can go to get help.

What is bullying?

Bullying is aggressive behaviour that is typically repeated over time. It is meant to cause harm, fear or distress or create a negative environment at school for another person. Bullying occurs in a situation where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.

Bullying can take many forms, including **physical, verbal, social, written and electronic**.

Not all conflict is bullying. Conflict occurs between two or more people who have a disagreement, a difference of opinion or different views. In conflict, each person feels comfortable expressing his or her views, and there is no power imbalance. Conflict becomes negative when an individual behaves aggressively by saying or doing hurtful things. Then the conflict is an aggressive interaction. Conflict only becomes bullying when it is repeated over and over again and there is a power imbalance.

A school will respond to bullying and conflict differently. In the case of a conflict, a school staff member will work to help the students resolve the situation together. In the case of bullying, a principal will consider progressive discipline, which may include suspension or expulsion.

Bullying is NEVER acceptable, and is NOT "just a part of growing up."

Victims and perpetrators of bullying are both at risk for many emotional, behavioural, and relationship problems:

- Students who are bullied often experience social anxiety, loneliness, withdrawal, physical illnesses and low self-esteem. They can also develop phobias, take on aggressive behaviour or slide into depression. Some students miss school, see their marks drop or even leave school altogether because they have been bullied.
- Children and teens who learn to use power and aggression to distress others may stop caring about the difference between right and wrong in general. Eventually, they may become abusive adults. Therefore, it is important to help them to stop bullying as early as possible.

How can I tell if my child or teenager is being bullied? Even if she doesn't talk about it, you can watch for signs that your child is being bullied, that can include:

- Children who are being bullied may not want to go to school or may cry or feel sick on school days.
- They may not want to take part in activities or social events with other students.
- They may act differently than they normally do.
- They might suddenly begin to lose money or personal items, or come home with torn clothes or broken possessions, and offer explanations that don't make sense.
- Teens who are bullied and/or harassed may also start talking about dropping out of school and begin skipping activities that involve other students.

My child is being bullied. What should I do?

- Listen to your child and assure him that he has a right to be safe.
- Be clear on the facts. Make notes about what happened and when it happened.
- Help your child see that there is a difference between “ratting”, “tattling” or “telling” and reporting. It takes courage to report. Reporting is done not to cause trouble for another student, but to protect all students.
- Make an appointment to talk to your child/teenager’s teacher, another teacher that your child/teenager trusts or the principal or vice-principal of the school.
- Difficult as it may be, try to remain calm so that you can support your child and plan a course of action with him or her.
- Stay on course. Keep an eye on your child’s behaviour. If your meetings with school staff haven’t made the bullying stop, go back and talk to the principal. Follow up on the steps that were agreed to at the meeting.
- Speak to the instructor or coach if the bullying is taking place during after-school activities or sports events.
- Contact police if the bullying involves criminal behaviour, such as sexual assault or use of a weapon, or if the threat to your child’s safety is in the community rather than the school.

Regardless of age, you can help by encouraging your child to talk to you about bullying and by giving the following advice:

- Stay calm and **walk away** from the situation.
- **Tell an adult** whom you trust – a teacher, the principal, the school bus driver or the lunchroom supervisor – about what happened or report it anonymously.
- **Talk about it** with your brothers or sisters, or with friends, so that you don’t feel you’re alone.
- **Call Kids Help Phone** at 1-800-668-6868 or visit www.kidshelpphone.ca

Both boys and girls can engage in bullying. Signs that your child may be bullying others at school can include:

- aggression, lack of empathy and disruptive behaviour at home, bullying siblings
- coming home with bruises, scrapes, torn clothing, extra money or new possessions

If staff becomes aware that your child is being bullied, you can expect the school to contact you. You may find that your child’s teacher or another teacher your child trusts may be able to help identify some strategies that will help resolve the problem.

Bullying prevention and intervention is about more than just eliminating bullying. It also promotes the development of healthy relationships. Healthy relationships involve respectful interactions between people, whether face-to-face or online. The goal is to help ensure that all students have healthy, safe, respectful and caring relationships with everyone in their lives.

For more information and resources, see: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/bullying-we-can-all-help-stop-it>