

What Is Bullying?

Parenting, in and of itself, is difficult, but then add a topic like bullying and it gets even more complicated. Many of us grew up thinking that bullying is a rite of passage. Some think the school needs to do more, others think the laws should be harsher and more involved, and some still feel that this is all blown out of proportion. The truth is, bullying is hurting our children and has dire consequences on their futures. The hope of Mojo Up, Inc. is to get more parents involved in the mission to help our kids. I believe when parents are educated about what bullying is—and in some cases what bullying is not—and what the school's policy, operation procedure, discipline and intervention plan looks like, it makes it much easier to help your students navigate through their tough times while they are in school.

Let's start with the definition of bullying. When evaluating bullying, in an attempt to understand it completely, it is imperative to examine real-life examples, including those that happen in your schools, homes and communities. Below you will find the basics of bullying as well as detailed information to help you understand the things you see in your community.

Bullying shall be defined as repeated use of physical, verbal (including spoken and written language), and/or cyber forces in a negative manner toward or in regard to another person.

This may include, but is not limited to: actions of mal intent concerning age, color, creed, race, national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, perceived reputation or family status.

Bullying that occurs on school grounds immediately before, after or during school hours, anytime the school is being used by a school group/organization, off school grounds at a school-sponsored event or activity, traveling to or from school or school-sponsored event, or off school grounds when actions may be considered a disruption to the school day or educational environment. This includes use of any school property or school-issued electronic devices.

- **Physical Bullying:** The repeated use of force toward a person's body or personal belongings.

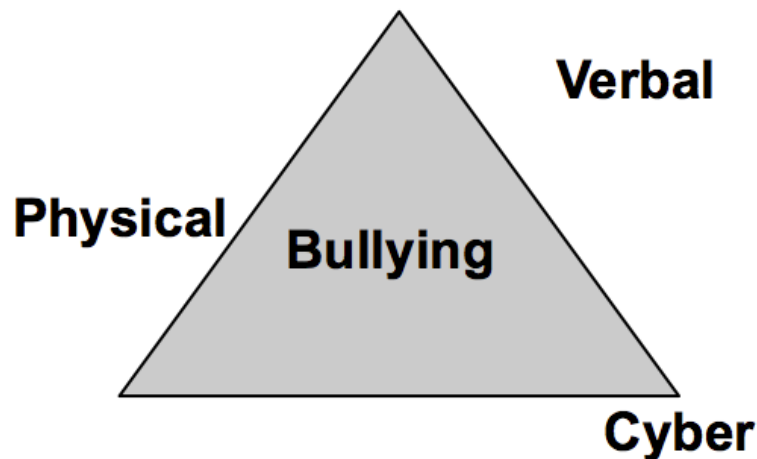
Examples: Hitting, punching, shoving, kicking, tripping, spitting, elbowing, shoulder checking, pinching, flicking, throwing objects, hair pulling, restraining, inappropriate touching, damaging physical property

- **Verbal Bullying:** Repeatedly using negative and/or damaging words (including both spoken and written) toward or in regard to another person (with mal intent).

Examples: Negative comments, name calling, lies, rumors, racial slurs, teasing, cussing, threats, fake compliments, using the “R” word, attacks on sexual orientation

- **Cyber Bullying:** Repeatedly using social media, email or electronic devices in a negative manner toward or in regard to another person.

Examples: Posting negative comments, fake profiles, sexting, making fun of photos, tagging photos, Twitter fights, posting negative videos, texting photos, negative status posts, hate blogs, hate pledges, texting rumors, hacking profiles, nasty emails, sending mean forwards



One of the key pieces of these definitions for parents to understand is the word *repeated*. That means if an incident happens one time, it will not fall under the schools bullying definition or policy, however, it may be addressed as harassment or intimidation. Also note that there are three specific types of bullying. For decades we saw bullying as simply a physical act, but today verbal and cyber bullying are the most prominent.

Most parents have two basic concerns when it comes to bullying. Is my child being bullied or is my child a part of bullying others? There is more to just bullying than being the bully or the bullied. In fact, most students fall into one of the other categories below and they too need to be educated and held responsible for their actions.

Roles of Bullying

Bully: Anybody who repeatedly intimidates, harasses or attacks others using physical, verbal or cyber force.

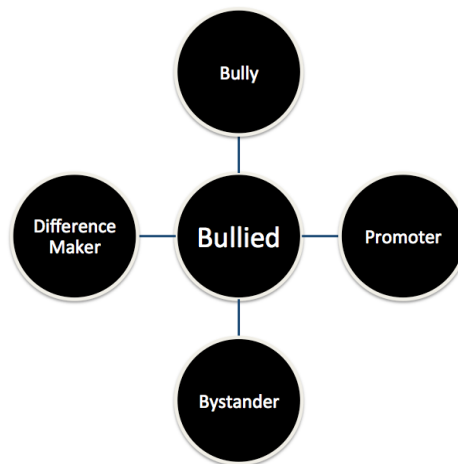
Bullied: Any student who is repeatedly intimidated, harassed or attacked via physical, verbal or cyber forces.

Promoter: Any student who promotes, encourages or instigates other students to participate in any form of bullying. In most policies and procedures this puts your student in the same discipline or intervention process as the bully.

Bystander : Any student who observes physical, verbal or cyber bullying occurring without attempting to help stop the attacks in any way. If your student witnesses something, they do have the responsibility to get help by reporting this to an administrator, teacher or staff member.

Difference Maker: Any person who decides to step in and step up and get help for someone who is being bullied.

Roles of Bullying



We all hope our kids will be the difference makers, but we as parents, along with the school, must be the ones encouraging that behavior. Setting the stage for that kind of behavior starts with our own actions. If our true desire is to get rid of bullying and raise our children in a safe and secure environment, then we need to teach our children to step in, step up, and make a difference!