

Educational Resources: Bullying, Conflict, Teasing

[From the National School Climate Center](#)

A Positive and Respectful School Climate is one that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe for all school community members... which is the antithesis of a school that is “violent”

Key Terms (by The National School Climate Center)

A **bully** is a person or group who uses physical, social, intellectual or psychological power to hurt, threaten or intimidate others. Here we use the term “bullying” and “bullying behavior” to refer to any behavior that is mean and cruel.

A **victim** is a person or group who is a target of the bullying behavior —often based on their race, social class, gender, or other attributes (e.g., prior relationship with the bully, immigrant status, language, religion, obesity, or special needs).

A **witness** is a person who observes or hears about cruel, mean and/or bullying behavior (as well as everything else “good and bad” that goes on in school). Students and adults who witness cruel, mean and/or bullying behavior make a conscious or unrecognized choice to be a bystander or an Upstander.

A **bystander** is a person or group who observes or hears about bully behavior. An active bystander supports/encourages the bully with words, gestures or actions. A passive bystander supports the bully by ignoring or doing nothing in response to the bullying.

An **upstander** is an individual or group who acts to interrupt or prevent bully behavior and/or supports the target of bullying. Upstanders are heroes, and are socially responsible examples to others.

Bully behavior can take many forms. It can be physical (poke, push, hit, kick), verbal (yell, tease, insult, threaten), or indirect (ignore, exclude, tease, spread rumors).

Cyber-bullying involves sending or posting hurtful, embarrassing or threatening texts or images electronically. Unlike other forms, cyber-bullying is more difficult to see and address, so it can be especially dangerous and= difficult to stop.

An **ally** is a person or group who supports others working to prevent harm and promote social change. Allies often work across barriers of race, age, gender, role or levels of power. Allies are Upstanders.

Empathy involves more than simply understanding another person’s point of view; empathy involves entering into the feelings and experience of the other(s), especially when your perspective is different. Empathy has to do with “the moral imagination” (John Paul Lederach).


Courage often involves standing up for a value, person or group in the face of threat fear or actual harm. One root of “courage” is from the French word, “coeur” – to speak and act from the heart. Courage has many roots, but it is often supported by the culture around us.


Teasing vs. Bullying

Teasing/Joking	Bullying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isn't intended to hurt the other person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is intended to hurt the other person emotionally or physically
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pokes fun in a lighthearted way. Maintains the dignity of everyone involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves humiliating, cruel, demeaning, or bigoted comments thinly disguised as jokes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows the teaser and person teased to trade roles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on an imbalance of power and is one-sided. The bully does all the taunting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is meant for both parties to laugh. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laughter is directed at the target, not with the target.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a small part of the activities shared by friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main interaction between bully and victim.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teasing stops when the person being teased becomes upset or says 'Stop' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying continues especially when the target becomes distressed or says 'Stop'

How to Respond to Bullying

- Intervene with Discipline
- Communicate clear discipline policies
- Every student should know that unkind acts will result in immediate discipline
- Create policies that give children who bully ownership of the problem and ways to solve it via:
 - **restitution,**
 - **resolution, and**
 - **reconciliation.**
- When dealing with children who bully, it is important to leave their dignity intact.
- Create and Maintain Positive School Climate
- Ensure environments that do not support any form of mean-spirited behaviors (physically, emotionally and intellectually)
- "Climates of Respect"
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 **Multimedia**—Listen to Stanford University education professor **Linda Darling-Hammond** talk about *'the instructional and systemic aspects of social, emotional, ethical and civic as well as intellectual education.'* [Click here to view video.](#)

 **Multimedia**—Listen to Neuroscientist **Richard Davidson** present his research on '*How social and emotional learning can affect the brain.*' [Click here to view video.](#)

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“A school’s culture has far more influence on life and learning in the schoolhouse than the state department of education, the superintendent, the school board, or even the principal can ever have.”

Roland Barth

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