

# bullying definition...

The definition of bullying may vary from source to source; however, it can be agreed that bullying is when the behavior intentionally hurts, harms, or humiliates another person physically or emotionally.

**Bullying is an imbalance of power between the aggressor and target.**

In certain situations where teasing or a mean behavior occurs, this may affect one person more while another person experiencing the same situation may be unbothered by it. Therefore, this behavior can be perceived differently by individuals. There are many different types of bullying and it's important to know when to differentiate between actual bullying or just an unkind behavior.

## Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children and adults that involves a real or perceived power imbalance, causes harm to others, and is intentional. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. If not managed, the aggressor and the target may have more serious and lasting problems in the future.

### Types of bullying:

- Verbal bullying includes teasing, name-calling, taunting, threatening
- Social bullying includes leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, embarrassing someone in public
- Physical bullying includes hitting/kicking/pinching, tripping/pushing, taking or breaking someone's things
- Cyber bullying includes sending a mean/inappropriate message or harmful content through text, email, and/ or social media
- Sexual bullying occurs when an individual or a group of individuals harass others through comments and actions that are sexual in nature. It can occur online or in person.
- Emotional bullying is saying or doing something to hurt ones' feelings (e.g., cruel teasing, talking viciously about people behind their backs, spreading humiliating rumors, and excluding kids from group activities).

## Difference between Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment are often used interchangeably when talking about hurtful or harmful behavior. They are very similar, but in terms of definition, there is an important difference.

### Bullying and harassment are similar, as they are both about:

- power and control
- actions that hurt or harm another person, physically or emotionally
- an imbalance of power between the target and the individual demonstrating the negative behavior, the aggressor
- the target having difficulty stopping the action directed at them

The distinction between bullying and harassment is when the bullying behavior directed at the target is also based on a protected class, that behavior is then defined as harassment. It can include unwelcome conduct such as verbal abuse, graphic or written statements, threats, physical assault, or other conduct that is threatening or humiliating.

Protected classes include: race, color, religion, sex, age, disability and national origin.



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## What is NOT bullying?

Kids, especially young kids, are still learning how to get along with others. But what many people do not realize is that not every unkind thing kids do constitutes bullying. Bullying may involve pushing, shoving, and calling people names. Aggressors also might engage in cyber bullying, relational aggression and countless other types of bullying. Children need parents, teachers and other adults to model kindness, conflict resolution, inclusion and responsibility. They may occasionally do or say something that is hurtful. And while it is important to address the behavior, it is inappropriate to label them a bully. Instead, try to distinguish between hurtful or unkind behavior, teasing, and bullying behavior.

## Here are some unkind behaviors that may get labeled as bullying when in reality they shouldn't:

### 1. Expressing Negative Thoughts and Feelings *Is Not Bullying*

Children are often open and honest with their thoughts and feelings and they may not think about the consequences after saying certain remarks. These unkind remarks may not always be bullying and usually come from a place of innocence. It is important for adults to give children the tools on how to ask questions or say things in a way that isn't offensive. Children on the receiving end of these remarks also should be taught to communicate their hurt feelings effectively and in an assertive manner when someone is unkind.

### 2. Being Left Out *Is Not Always Bullying*

It's natural for a child to have a close group of friends, but unrealistic to be friends with every peer they know. Some children may get invited to a birthday party, while others may not. It's important to let children know that at times this happens, and there may be moments where they too won't include everyone in regards to a birthday or play date. However, exclusion is different, particularly because that is when a person is intentionally causing harm by leaving the other person out. If exclusion occurs, that is considered bullying.

### 3. Experiencing Conflict *Is Not Bullying*

Kids may have disagreements at times and dealing with conflict is a normal part of growing up. If a fight or disagreement happens between friends, it is not considered bullying. It is important for children to know when a disagreement is happening and to handle it in a peaceful and respectful manner.

### 4. Good-Natured Teasing *Is Not Bullying*

Kids at times may get teased by siblings or friends, or mutually make fun of each other in a friendly manner. It is not bullying when both kids find it funny and there is no conscious effort to hurt another person. Teasing can become bullying when kids make demeaning comments, engage in name-calling, spread unsavory rumors and/or make threats.

### 5. Not Playing Fair *Is Not Bullying*

Wanting games to be played a certain way is not considered bullying. This behavior may come from being assertive or from selfishness. However, when a child begins to consistently threaten or physically hurt other kids, then that can transform into bullying. At that point, a child has crossed the line of selfishness to having total power and control in the relationship. It's key to let children know if they have friends who behave in a controlling manner to let them know that things can be tried their way; however, it's important to try other ways of doing things as well.

## Conclusion

If you sense or know that your child is a target of bullying, it's important to communicate with them and take action right away. Have open conversations with them on the situation and always let them know that what they are experiencing is not ok and not their fault. Keep a written record of all bullying incidents as reported by your child and report them immediately to their school or local authorities, when appropriate. Building positive relationships between the school, parents, and students will ensure that a plan and time line of action can be quickly set in place to prevent further bullying.

References - [antibullyinginstitute.org](http://antibullyinginstitute.org), [pacer.org](http://pacer.org), [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov), [verywellfamily.com](http://verywellfamily.com)



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