

What is Bullying?

Sometimes it can be difficult to determine if actions are in fact bullying. Here is a definition and explanation that you can use to tell if your child is being bullied or if your child has been a bystander to bullying.

“Bullying is when someone repeatedly and on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending himself or herself.” – Dr. Dan Olweus

There are three aspects of bullying:

1. There is an imbalance of power. This means that the person or people who are bullying have power or strength over another person or people. For example, the person who is bullying may be more popular, physically bigger, taller or older.
2. Bullying is unwanted and forceful. This is aggressive behavior.
3. Bullying happens more than once or has the possibility of happening more than once. For a long time, actions were considered bullying only if they were repeated over time, but now we recognize that bullying can occur even if the threat of more bullying is possible.

There are different types of bullying (from stopbullying.gov):

1. *Verbal* – saying or writing mean things
2. *Social or Relational* – hurting someone’s relationships or friendships
3. *Physical* – hurting someone’s body

Many parents, students, and educators are quite concerned about **cyberbullying**, which “is bullying through email or instant messaging, in a chat room, on a website or an online gaming site, or through digital messages or video images sent to a cell phone. Cyberbullying, like traditional bullying, involves a negative action that is often repeated and includes an imbalance of power” (Limber, Kowalski, and Agatson 2008).

If you would like to learn more about cyberbullying, the National White Collar Crime Center has created a [Cyber-bullying training](#) for adults. It takes about 30-45 minutes to complete.

Sources:

U.S. Department of Education stopbullying.gov

[Olweus Bullying Prevention Program](#)

Limber, Susan, Robin Kowalski and Patricia Agatston. *Cyberbullying: A Prevention Curriculum for Grades 6-12*, 2nd ed. Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2008. Print.

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