

What is Bullying?

Dan Olweus, creator of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, provides us with this commonly-accepted definition for bullying in his book, *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*:

"A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself."

This definition includes three important components:

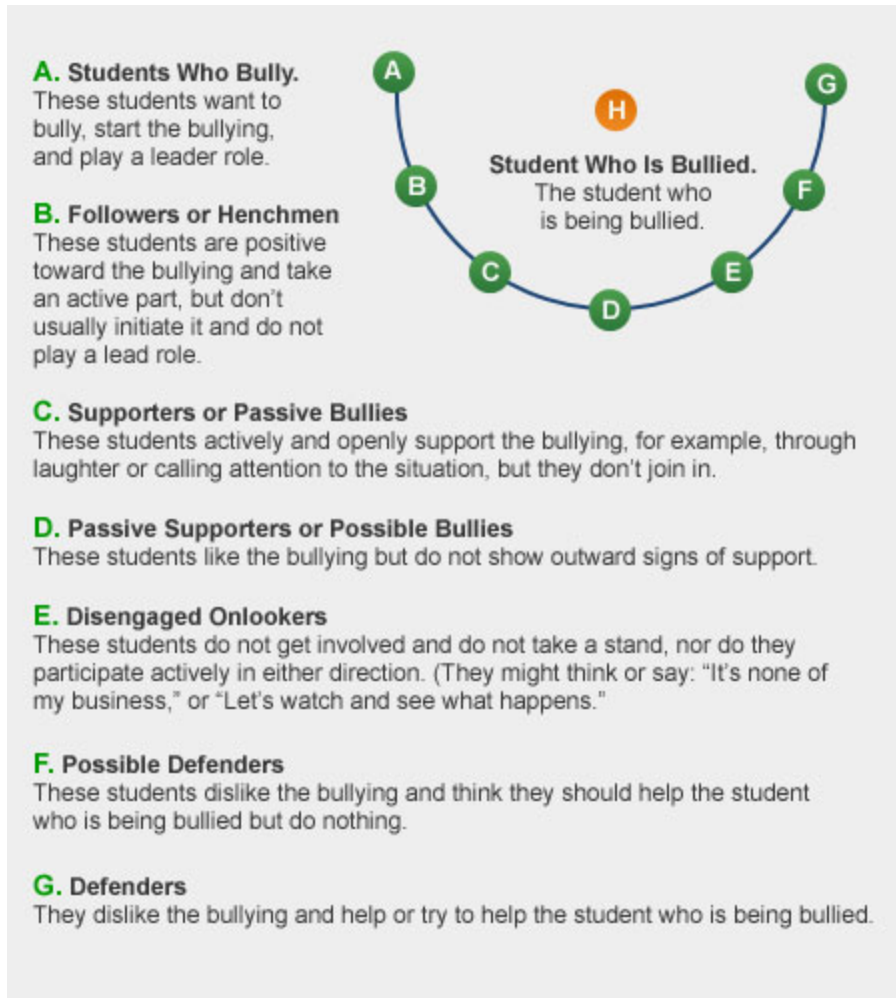
- Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
- Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
- Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can take on many forms. As part of the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire, students are asked if they have been bullied in any of these nine ways:

- Verbal bullying, including derogatory comments and bad names
- Bullying through social exclusion or isolation
- Physical bullying, such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting
- Bullying through lies and false rumors
- Having money or other things taken or damaged by students who bully
- Being threatened or being forced to do things by students who bully
- Racial bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Cyber bullying (via cell phone or Internet)

Olweus Bullying Circle



Why Students Bully

Information about bullying suggests that there are three interrelated reasons why students bully:

- Students who bully have strong needs for power and (negative) dominance.
- Students who bully find satisfaction in causing injury and suffering to other students.
- Students who bully are often rewarded in some way for their behavior with material or psychological rewards.

Impact of Bullying

A single student who bullies can have a wide-ranging impact on the students they bully, students who observe bullying, and the overall climate of the school and community.

Students who are Bullied

Students deserve to feel safe at school. But when they experience bullying, these types of effects can last long into their future:

- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Health problems
- Poor grades
- Suicidal thoughts

Students Who Bully Others

Students who intentionally bully others should be held accountable for their actions. Those who bully their peers are also more likely than those students who do not bully others to:

- Get into frequent fights
- Steal and vandalize property
- Drink alcohol and smoke
- Report poor grades
- Perceive a negative climate at school
- Carry a weapon

Observers of Bullying

Students who see bullying happen also may feel that they are in an unsafe environment. Effects may include feeling:

- Fearful
- Powerless to act
- Guilty for not acting
- Tempted to participate

Schools with Bullying Issues

When bullying continues and a school does not take action, the entire school climate can be affected in the following ways:

- The school develops an environment of fear and disrespect.
- Students have difficulty learning.
- Students feel insecure.
- Students dislike school.
- Students perceive that teachers and staff have little control and don't care about them.

Bullying Is a Serious Issue

Bullying may vary greatly between schools and school districts, but it is very prevalent:

Statistics show that 23 percent of students in grades 4-6 had been bullied "several times" or more; 20 percent had bullied others. (1998 study of 6,500 students in rural South Carolina)

Statistics show that 17 percent of students in grades 6-10 reported having been bullied "sometimes" or more, with 8 percent being bullied once a week. 19 percent said they had been a bully to others "sometimes" or more. (2001 study of 15,000 U.S. students)

Studies have found that while boys tend to use overt forms of aggression (such as physical and verbal aggression) in bullying, girls' bullying behaviors often focus on damaging an individual's social connections within the peer group (e.g., Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999).

Responsibility of the School

School Safety Plan

Staff shall consistently enforce board policy and regulations which establish rules for appropriate student conduct, including prohibitions against bullying, cyber bullying, harassment of students, hazing, other violence or threats of violence against students.

Positive School Climate

The school shall promote non-violent conflict resolution techniques to encourage attitudes and behaviors that foster harmonious relations. As a part of this effort, students shall be taught the skills necessary to reduce violence, including communication skills, anger management, bias reduction and mediation skills.

Unacceptable Behavior for Students

- Confronting, intimidating others as a large group
- Deliberately seeking students out to humiliate, taunt, embarrass or harass
- Excluding others publicly by telling them to leave or that they are not allowed to be somewhere
- Name calling and threats in person or electronically

Problem-Solving Strategies

If you are being bullied:

- Tell an adult: your parent, the teacher, the school resource officer, office, counselor, etc.

If you are frustrated or mad at someone:

- Talk to your parent or respected adult
- You don't have to remain friends with them, ignore them/
- Do not encourage others to dislike the person, do not spread rumors or get others to help you confront them.
- If you want to resolve it, meet with them one on one or ask an adult to help you work it out.
- Focus on the positive friendships and events

If your friend is bullying someone:

- Walk away and stop supporting the inappropriate behavior of your friend.
- Encourage your friend to handle the problem one on one.
- Remind them it is unfair and inappropriate to confront the others as a large group.
- Confronting someone as a group is not a problem-solving strategy.

Current School Strategies

- Counseling
- Mediation -- Group and One-on-One & Restorative Justice Meeting
- Campolindo & AUHSD Discipline policies

Bullying Links

- [Olweus Bullying Prevention Program](#)
- [California Education Code 48900](#)