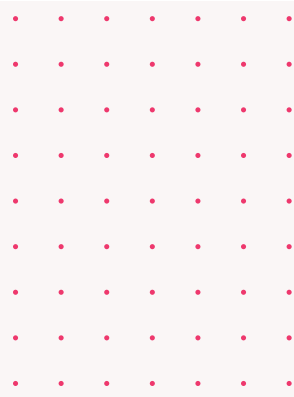


# Defining Bullying

Together as a classroom or team, develop an understanding of what bullying looks and sounds like.



## Step 1: Facilitate reflection and sharing

Choose one of the following prompts/series of prompts, and write/project it on the board. Invite students to reflect, journal, or draw independently in response.

- **Grades K-5:** What does “bullying” mean to you?
- **Grades 6-12:** How would you define “bullying”? As you have gotten older, have you noticed ways that bullying has changed (e.g., looks different, sounds different, takes place in different spaces)?

Students partner up. Support students in establishing who is “Partner 1” and who is “Partner 2.” Give Partner 1 one minute to share their response with Partner 2. Partner 2 should listen without interrupting. Switch: Give Partner 2 one minute to share their response with Partner 1.

Invite students to share their ideas with the entire class. List headlines on the board.

## Step 2: Co-generate a definition of “bullying”

Explain to students that having a shared understanding of what bullying means and what it looks and sounds like is an important part of preventing it from happening in the first place.

Work with students to co-generate a developmentally appropriate definition of bullying. There are several ways you might do this. Here are a few examples:

- **Start with students’ reflections (Grades K-12):** Using the reflections from the think-pair-share that you already recorded on the board, support students in generating their own definition and examples.
- **Start with a definition (Grades K-12):** Share a developmentally appropriate definition of bullying with students. Invite students to adjust the definition based on the reflections from the think-pair-share that you already recorded on the board.
- **Start with small-group work (Grades 4-12):** Support students in forming small groups. Small groups craft their own definitions on chart paper. Clarify that plans must include (1) a definition of bullying and (2) some examples of what bullying might look and sound like. Groups share their definitions with the class and post their work on the board. Finally, guide the group in synthesizing their ideas to create a single, shared definition supported by several examples.

In early elementary classrooms, it is likely that you will need to carry more of the cognitive load of synthesizing students’ reflections. Likewise, you may need to provide additional prompting to arrive at a complete definition supported by examples (e.g., “What might bullying sound like?” “What might it look like?”).

## Step 3: Discuss scenarios

Share several developmentally appropriate scenarios. Invite students to determine whether or not each scenario is an example of bullying and why.

There are many ways to facilitate this activity. Here are a few examples:

- **Grades K-12:** Read a scenario aloud. Then, facilitate a think-pair-share followed by whole-class sharing and discussion.
- **Grades K-12:** Post signs around the room reading, “Bullying,” “Not Bullying” and “Unsure.” Read a scenario aloud and invite students to go to the sign that matches their assessment. Then, facilitate discussion.
- **Grades 4-12:** Print and cut out the scenarios. Have students work together in small groups to sort the scenarios into two piles: examples and non-examples. Then facilitate whole-class sharing and discussion.

### Examples

Elementary School	Secondary School
One student repeatedly teases another student about their name.	A group of students make fun of how another student looks.
During recess, a group of students repeatedly calls another student a mean name.	One student makes a post on social media that encourages peers not to befriend another student.
While lining up to go to lunch, one student pushes another student on purpose.	One student spreads a rumor about another student through group text.

### Non-examples

Elementary School	Secondary School
One student isn’t invited to play/sleep over at their friend’s house, while others are.	One student unfollows another student on social media.
During PE class, one student gets into an argument with another student over who gets the first turn at an activity.	Two students are romantically interested in the same person and get into a physical fight over it.
While lining up to go to lunch, one student accidentally bumps into another student.	Two students are on a fundraising committee for their club/team and disagree about how to raise the most money.

## Step 4: Revisit your definition

Ask students: Based on our experience working with the example scenarios, do we need to revise our definition in any way?

## Step 5: Preview what comes next

Explain to students how bullying fits into your plan for establishing a community of mutual respect and inclusion, your social-emotional learning curriculum, and/or your school’s or district’s bullying prevention programming and initiatives.

Preview for them what will come next in their learning sequence (e.g., generating a community contract, learning how to be an ally).