

Definitions of Peer Aggression and Bullying

PEER AGGRESSION

Verbal Aggression involves words that hurt and/or humiliate, including but not limited to teasing, name calling, and/or insulting. The following are categories of verbal aggression.

1. *Careless hurtful remarks* appear to be thoughtless rather than malicious; repetitive “careless hurtful remarks” are probably not thoughtless, but in fact may be “verbal or written teasing/taunting.”
2. *Verbal or written teasing/taunting* is the expression of language which is deliberately hurtful to a target’s feelings, and can either be made directly to the target or within his/her or other children’s hearing or sight.
3. *Verbal or written threats or taunts* are explicit remarks threatening future harmful behavior.
4. *Encouraging such aggression* is also a type of verbal aggression.

Physical Aggression involves physical actions that are hurtful. The following are categories of physical aggression.

1. *Physical threats* include physical gestures used to convey to a target that he/she will be hurt, such as but not limited to raising a clenched fist or drawing a finger across the throat.
2. *Physical harassment* involves physically touching a target in a hurtful way that is unlikely to cause injury, including by not limited to pinching, pulling off hats, grabbing books, and/or blocking one’s way.
3. *Physical attacks* include, but are not limited to, pushing, shoving, kicking, hitting, punching, or pinning down.
4. *Taking or damaging someone’s property* is another form of physical aggression.

Relational Aggression involves convincing one’s peers to exclude or reject certain persons and cut them off from their social connections.

BULLYING

Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of physical, psychological, or emotional power.

CYBER-BULLYING

Cyber-bullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications if they create any of the conditions outlined in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages. Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions outlined in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying can be as simple as continuing to send e-mail to someone who has said they want no further contact with the sender, but it may also include threats, sexual remarks, racial remarks, ganging up on victims by making them the subject of ridicule in forums, and posting false statements as fact aimed at humiliation.

Cyber-bullies may also send threatening and harassing emails and instant messages to the victims, while others post rumors or gossip and instigate others to dislike and gang up on the target.