

I. Texas Education Code definition:

Bullying is defined as engaging in written or verbal expression or physical conduct that a school district board of trustees or the board's designee determines: (1) will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Bullying may be in the form of physical conduct or written verbal expression, such as hazing, threats, taunting, intimidation, rumor-spreading, demands for money, confinement, assault, and ostracism. Bullying does not include mere horseplay, however.

Cyber-bullying is a form of bullying involving the internet, text messaging, and similar technology to bully their targets. This can occur on or off campus.

The terms bullying and harassment are often used interchangeably. However, harassment is most commonly used to refer to discrimination based on a legally protected characteristic; such as, dating violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, racial and other harassment.

II. Key Factors for Bullying:

A summary of the above definition for bullying: (1) the willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone; or (2) targeting someone for repetitive negative actions; or (3) an imbalance of power; or (4) a pattern of behavior.

There is intent to harm. The person who bullies finds pleasure in taunting or trying to dominate the target and continues even when the target's distress is obvious.

There is intent to overpower someone. The person who bullies has power over the target because of age, strength, size or gender. They will target others who are exploitable, with low self-esteem, sensitive to teasing, cannot defend him or herself.

The bullying action is progressive in duration and intensity.

The target feels vulnerable. The target feels isolated and exposed. Often, the target is afraid to report the bullying for fear of retaliation. They feel they cannot defend themselves.

Bullying behaviors can be physical, social, emotional or cyber. The behaviors can range from teasing to extortion to death threats to dirty looks to ostracizing.

III. Bully Intervention:

Bully behavior is most likely to occur where there is:

- no adult supervision, inadequate adult supervision or poor supervision
- a lack of structure
- few or no anti-bullying rules
- an acceptance of bullying by teachers and students who are indifferent to it
- adult intervention is infrequent and unhelpful, and fear that telling adults will only bring more harassment from bullies

IV. Bullying Intervention Report

- Name of student(s) involved
- Time and place of incident
- Briefly describe the incident
- Witnesses of the incident

V. Adult intervention strategies

When you see bullying happening or you think it is happening...

- Stop it right away, state the behavior, support the target, involve witnesses and state an immediate consequence.
- Use “I” statements such as, “What I heard sounded very insulting.”
- Make it clear how you expect students to treat each other.
- Follow up in private, listen to each participant and have everyone write statements.
- Inform appropriate staff for further investigation, contact of parents and possible consequences.