

Definitions of Bullying

Definitions of bullying provided in the Department’s “Promising Practices Guide”

“The New York State Dignity for All Students Act: A Resource and Promising Practices Guide for School Administrators & Faculty” is available online at:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/documents/FINALDignityForAllStudentsActGuidanceDec2017.pdf>

- *Dignity Act Statutory and Regulatory Definition (pg. 53)*. **Harassment and bullying** means the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation, or abuse, including cyberbullying, that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional, or physical well-being; or reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; or reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property. Acts of harassment and bullying shall include, but not be limited to, those acts based on a person’s actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex. For the purposes of this definition the term “threats, intimidation or abuse” shall include verbal and non-verbal actions. (Education Law §11[7]).
- *Dignity Act-Related Term Definition (pg. 54)*. **Bullying** has been described by the U.S. Department of Education as unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. According to the U.S. Department of Education, bullying generally involves the following characteristics:
 - **An Imbalance of Power:** Individuals who bully use their power, such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
 - **Intent to Cause Harm:** The person bullying has a goal to cause harm. Bullying is not accidental.
 - **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors generally happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal: Name-calling, teasing, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting and threatening to cause harm.
- Social: Spreading rumors about someone, excluding others on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, and embarrassing someone in public.
- Physical: Hitting, punching, shoving, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking someone’s things and making mean or rude hand gestures.

For more information see: www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/index.html

Definition of bullying offered by the Queering Education Research Institute

Bullying is overt verbal, physical, or technology-based aggression that is persistently focused on targeted person(s) over time and typically replicates structural inequalities based on race, gender, nationality, language, sexual orientation, social class, religion, ethnicity, and (dis)ability by policing the boundaries between “normal” and “different” in a specific social context. Individuals who are targeted are likely “bullied” or marginalized by multiple students for their perceived difference (Payne & Smith, 2013).