

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power: Kids 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.**
- **Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.**

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. *

Have you spoken to your child about what is going on?

YES: Talk to them again and try to find out what they would like you to do. It is important that they feel involved in plans to resolve the bullying. Take notes about the incidents - names, dates, locations, or text/email messages if relevant.

NO: Sit down with them and try to establish what is actually going on. Just talking things through and making you aware of what's going on can be enough for some children and young people. If they want you to do something, listen and involve them in what the steps you decide to take.

Have they told any adults at school that they are being bullied?

YES: When did they tell? Has anything happened since they told? The first action is to allow the school time to sort out bullying incidents. Sometimes this may take longer than you would like it to, so you are within your rights to call the school and ask what we are doing.

NO: Please make us aware of all bullying-related incidents. Please feel free to call and speak to us on behalf of your child. Even if you speak for them, your child will have to be prepared to speak to a teacher or administrator themselves, so make sure we know all the details from their perspective.

'Helping them get back that feeling of being in control and being themselves again'

If we can accept that it takes something away from someone, our focus has to be on helping them to get it back; helping them get back that feeling of being in control and being themselves again. That's why we have to involve young people in what they want to happen, what they would like to happen, and what they are worried about happening. And sometimes we need to take a lead from them as to what pace we go at. If we can do that, we can help restore that feeling of being in control.

Our school has compassionate teachers, staff and a school counselor that can help with this process. As a team, we can work with the child to make sure they have gained back their sense of power and control.

What advice should I give to my child?

There is never one, single, answer when it comes to bullying, it's about knowing how to think about it and how to approach it.

Sometimes you have to ask your child, 'What do you want to happen?' 'Tell me what you have done so far?' 'What would you like me to do?' 'What do you think would happen if I was to go up to the school and talk to them about it?'

We should always take a moment, pause and think, 'how do I give my child back a sense of being in control?', because it's that sense of being in control that has been taken from them, and that has to focus your response.

Commitment by the school to your to child.

It is the commitment of the school and the school district to be proactive in our efforts to keep students safe, and feeling secure at school. We build appropriate relationships with the students, families, caregivers so that we have a positive team with which to ensure everyone works together.

Please reach out to your child's teacher to help with any situation in which you or your child needs help. They in turn will work with administration, with your assistance, to review and investigate situations for a positive outcome.

The Pleasanton Unified School District is committed to maintaining safe spaces for all stakeholders. The district and the School Board have specific policies about bullying that are addressed in Board Policy 5131.2 Students. You can access this policy from this [link](#), and the district's web page on [Bullying Prevention here](#).

**(<https://www.stopbullying.gov/> Retrieved August, 4, 2018)*