

Bullying Bulletin

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Northwood-Kensett Schools

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7th & 8th Counselor

Let's play a game... It's called "Is it bullying?" Read the following five scenarios and decide: Is it bullying? Or not?

Scenario #1: Susie has had a rough time transitioning into middle school. Her friends from last year don't seem to want to hang out with her this year. They ignore her at school and don't invite her to their sleepovers or other activities after school.

Scenario #2: Joe had lots of friends, until he got to be starting quarterback on his football squad. Now, the guys he has hung out with since elementary school are writing cruel things to him online and whisper embarrassing, insulting things about him when the teacher's not

Scenario #3: Mary is an 8th grade student. Recently, classmates have started to notice how pretty Mary is. Her male classmates all really like her, and her female classmates are comparing themselves to her. Mostly out of jealousy, they regularly nit-pick her for her "flaws" and intentionally exclude her from activities, even though they agree that she is "so pretty."

Scenario #4: Jack is very opinionated, and often gets worked up when talking about things that he's very passionate about. While his classmates listen and respect his right to an opinion, Jack finds himself without a partner for class projects or people to talk to.

Scenario #5: Grace is an elementary student. She has a very active imagination, and often pretends to be fairy tale characters during school hours. She finds herself playing alone during recess, and sometimes a classmate will point out how "weird" she is.

Answers: Unfortunately, scenarios 2 & 3 are the only ones that qualify as "bullying" by definition. Here at school, we can work on our school's climate, which deals with how people (teachers, students, and others) treat each other, and over time we can reduce the amount of scenarios that are like 1, 4, & 5. At school we can manage students who are exhibiting "Bullying" behaviors, such as physical or verbal abuse, excluding someone on purpose, campaigning for others to not be friends with a specific person, or spreading rumors. We can mandate that every student is civil and respectful to one another, but we can't guarantee that everyone at school is friends with one another, and we cannot stop students from having natural reactions to behavior that makes them uncomfortable. Over time, we hope to bridge the gaps in making our school the kindest and most accepting it can be.