

# January

**Key Message:** Conflict is inevitable, bullying is not

**Focus:** Recognizing the difference between conflict and bullying

**Objective:**

Students will learn to differentiate bullying from the daily conflict situations everyone faces.  
Students will learn how to use “I-messages” to deal with conflict and initial bullying situations.

**Introduction / Background:**

As schools start to focus on bullying and raise awareness with students, it is common for there to be a sudden upsurge in the identification of ‘bullying’ situations. It seems that *everything* becomes bullying, especially with students. Becoming familiar with the definition is one step; learning to apply the definition to situations is the next.

Everyone faces conflict in daily life and through it can learn to negotiate and build relationships. Bullying is a form of violence that leaves no room for negotiation and seeks to tear others down rather than build relationships.

The power imbalance between the person bullying and the person being bullied is the best and quickest determinant of bullying versus conflict. Power can come in many forms: size, age, strength, number, social status, economic resources, ability, or sense of self. Children who bully usually find pleasure in their behaviours and the reaction of others. The perception of power imbalance is identified by the child who is bullied.

**Some Key Differences Between Bullying and Conflict** *(based on the work of Dan Olweus, 1993)*

Normal Conflict	Bullying Behaviour
Occasional	Is a repeated happening
Not pre-planned, in the heat of the moment	Premeditated, on purpose, intentional, planned
Genuine upset to both parties	Person being bullied is more upset
Trying to work things out	Trying to be the one in control
Not trying to take something from someone	Want to take power or possessions from someone
Both parties admit some responsibility	Blame is laid on the person who is bullied
Effort to solve the problem by both parties	No effort to solve the problem by the person bullying

Students who are confronted about their bullying behaviours often fall back on excuses such as “I was just teasing” or “It’s not my fault they can’t take a joke”. It is important to understand that there is a great difference between joking, teasing and bullying.

**Joking:** Intention is to create humour and fun; usually between friends; reciprocal

**Teasing:** Intention is to provoke a reaction such as anger, resentment or confusion

**Curriculum Links:** Oral and Visual Communication, OPHEA (Phys Ed), Visual Arts, Dramatic Arts, Language Arts – Literature, Family Life

## **Conflict is Inevitable, Bullying is Not**

### **Grade 2**

#### **Materials:**

Definition of bullying (*posted in classroom*)  
“Is This Bullying?” scenarios (*Appendix 2-A*)  
Chalkboard or chart paper

#### **Procedure:**

1. Review the definition of bullying
2. Class discussion – not everything is bullying  
*“There will always be times when we don’t get along with others and we have disagreements, but that is different than bullying. It is not bullying unless the behaviour is: on purpose to try to hurt us, one-sided or unfair, and it usually happens more than once.”*
3. Use the “Is This Bullying?” scenarios to have students identify bullying situations.  
Have students role play the scenarios. Ask the class whether each scenario depicts bullying or conflict. Discuss the reasons for their choices and then apply the definition of bullying to the situation to find the answer.
4. Talk to the students about using “I-messages”.  
*“We sometimes feel upset by things that someone else has done and it is important to be able to talk to that person about what is happening and how we feel. We need to tell them how we feel, what upset us and what we want to see happen. This is called an “I-message” because we talk about ourselves instead of calling people names or blaming them for how we feel.”*  
“I-messages” work best in conflict situations or initial bullying situations.
5. Write the “I-message” formula on the board or chart paper.  
*“I feel.....when.....and I want.....”*
6. Review the scenarios with the students making up an “I-message” to respond to each.  
You may wish to provide an example of an “I-message” for each situation.

#### **Extension Activities:**

1. Hold a class discussion about situations students have encountered and use the definition to determine whether they are bullying or conflict.
2. Have students create their own skits about bullying or conflict. Present them to the class and have them decide whether the skit is bullying or conflict. Resolve the situations using I-messages and discuss when they need to get adult help.
3. Read the book ‘The Horax’ by Dr. Seuss and discuss feelings related to the story.

# Is This Bullying?

Tamsin, Kate and Sarah usually play together at recess. Today when Tamsin looks for them on the playground she can't find them. Later she learns Kate and Sarah stayed in to help a teacher over recess. Tamsin feels left out. Is this bullying?

*No, it's not done to hurt her on purpose, not repeated*

Kate and Sarah volunteer to help a teacher with a project over recess. When Tamsin tells Kate she'd like to join them, Kate rolls her eyes and says "We don't need someone like you who always messes things up". Kate says to Sarah "What a loser" and the two of them begin to laugh. Is this bullying?

*Yes, repeated (eye rolling, put down, gossip, laughing at her), on purpose to hurt*

During gym class Billy holds his nose and announces to everyone that Frank has stinky feet. Later when the class is getting a drink of water Billy tells them not to let Frank use the water fountain because he has 'cooties'. Is this bullying?

*Yes, it's mean behaviour, happening more than once and on purpose to hurt Frank*

Peter who is a bus monitor tells Todd he needs to sit down in his seat on the bus. Is this bullying?

*No, he's just saying what the rule is*

Yesterday Peter, an older student, pushed Todd into a seat on the bus. Today Peter finds Todd on the bus and tells him to change seats. When Todd starts down the aisle Peter sticks out his foot and trips him. Is this bullying?

*Yes, it's mean behaviour, happening more than once and on purpose to hurt Todd*

(Some scenarios from Imagine...A School without Bullying: A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention, 2004)