

# What is Bullying?

Bullying, harassment and intimidation are not tolerated in ACPS. As per sec. 22.1-276.01 of the Code of Virginia, bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior that:

- Is intended to harm, intimidate or humiliate the targeted person,
- Involves a real or perceived imbalance of power or strength; and
- Is typically repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma.

Bullying can take a variety of forms, such as:

- **Verbal bullying** which includes name calling, making threats, insults, intimidation, remarks regarding race, gender, religion, physical abilities, sexual orientation, physical characteristics or other forms of verbal abuse.
- **Physical bullying** which consists of hitting, kicking, tripping, spitting, pinching, pushing, or damaging someone's property.
- **Relational or social bullying** which is designed to hurt someone's reputation or relationships. It includes:
  - Spreading rumors
  - Embarrassing or humiliating someone publicly.
  - Excluding or encouraging others to exclude someone.
- **Cyberbullying** which is taunting or humiliation through the use of electronic technology such as cell phones, computers, tablets and communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat and websites. It includes:
  - Mean text messages and emails
  - Rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites
  - Posting embarrassing pictures, videos, websites or fake online profiles
- Bullying *does not include*
  - Ordinary teasing or horseplay,
  - Mutual arguments or peer conflict,
  - Isolated acts of meanness, aggression, social rejection or fights.

Bullying can have damaging effects on those targeted by the behaviors, those who witness the behavior and those who engage in the behavior. In some cases, the negative impact of bullying can be long term and has the potential to cause emotional trauma.