MOLINE-COAL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Is It Bullying?
A Guide for Parents

Bullying is when someone repeatedly says or does something hurtful to another student on purpose. It can happen face-to-face, in writing, or online/phones.

Bullying is considered serious when it:

- Makes a student feel afraid, they might get hurt or have their belongings damaged
- Has a harmful effect on a student's physical or emotional health
- Makes it hard for a student to focus or do well in school
- Gets in the way of a student taking part in school activities or enjoying school

Understanding the difference between bullying and typical peer conflict helps us all respond appropriately and support students effectively. Below are a few examples of different situations that may or may not meet the definition of bullying.

Bullying vs. Not Bullying	
Bullying	**Not Bullying**
A group of students repeatedly mocks a classmate online and spreads rumors, causing the student to withdraw socially and avoid school.	Two students have a one-time argument over a misunderstanding at lunch.
A student pushes another in the hallway every week and threatens them to keep quiet or it will get worse.	Two friends get into a rough game of tag at recess that ends in hurt feelings but no ongoing conflict.
A peer continually calls a student a hurtful nickname in front of others, even after being asked to stop.	One student makes a rude comment about another's shirt and then apologizes.
A student sends repeated messages to a classmate telling them no one likes them and they should leave school.	Two students argue over who gets to sit next to their favorite teacher during a field trip.
A student is excluded from group work and lunch tables over several weeks due to their appearance or identity.	A student isn't picked for a team during P.E. because others thought someone else had better skills.
Every day, a student tells another that if they don't hand over their lunch money, they'll get beat up.	A student jokingly says "Give me your lunch" once and laughs it off when the other says no.

MOLINE-COAL VALLEY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Key Questions to Ask:

- Is it repeated or hard to escape from/avoid?
- Does it cause harm or fear?
- Does it interfere with learning or participation?

If the answer is **yes** to any of these, it may be bullying.

Reminder:

Even if a situation isn't classified as bullying, it still deserves attention. Schools address all harmful behavior to support safe learning for everyone.

Click here to report incidents of Bullying or Harassment