WUSD and Bullying
Why talk about bullying?

According to StopBullying.gov:

- 28% of US students in grades 6-12 report being bullied
- 30% of children admit to bullying others
- When bystanders intervene, bullying stops within 10 seconds 57% of the time

It is important to distinguish between rude, mean and bullying so that teachers, school administrators, police, youth workers, parents and kids all know what to pay attention to and when to intervene. As we have heard too often in the news, a child’s future may depend on a non-jaded adult’s ability to discern between rudeness at the bus stop and life-altering bullying.
What bullying is...

...and what it is not

Which one is it?
Definition: Inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else
- Spontaneous, unplanned inconsideration
- Based on thoughtlessness, poor manners, narcissism

Examples:
- Burping in someone’s face
- Jumping ahead in line
- Bragging about achieving the highest grade
- Throwing a crushed up pile of leaves in someone’s face
- Grabbing a pencil out of someone’s hand
- Inadvertently laughing when someone trips
MEAN behavior

**Definition:** *Purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone once (or maybe twice)*

- Aims to hurt or depreciate someone
- Can be words spoken in anger (impulsive cruelty)
- Motivated by angry feelings and/or misguided goal of propping themselves up by putting someone else down

**Examples:**
- Criticizing clothing
- Ridiculing looks or intelligence
- Kicking someone
- Teasing someone for getting out of four square
- Making a racially inappropriate comment
BULLYING behavior

**Definition:** Intentionally aggressive behavior, repeated over time, that involves an imbalance of power

- Intent to harm
- No remorse or regret
- Physical, verbal, relational or carried out via technology
BULLYING behavior (cont’d)

Examples of physical aggression:

- Hitting
- Punching
- Kicking
- Spitting
- Tripping
- Hair pulling
- Slamming a child into a locker
BULLYING behavior (cont’d)

Examples of verbal aggression:
● What past generations told us to “just ignore”
● Ridicule
● Threats
● Targeted racial slurs
● Put-downs
BULLYING behavior (cont’d)

Examples of relational aggression:
- Social exclusion
- Shunning (i.e., “You can’t play with us”)
- Hazing
- Rumor spreading
- Leveraging friendship
BULLYING behavior (cont’d)

Definition and examples of cyberbullying:

- Willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices
- Particularly harmful as it can be accessed repeatedly and by different parties
- Snapchat messages
- Pictures posted on Facebook without consent for the purpose of ridicule
- Comments on posts
- Texting
- Chatting
BULLYING vs. Mean: What’s the Difference?

repeated over time

- Established pattern of behavior
- Not multiple isolated incidents (ie 1st grade then again in 3rd)
- Can be similar behaviors, but not necessarily (ie mean words one week, stealing lunch box the next, punching the next)

involves an imbalance of power

- Multiple students vs. single student
- Larger or more aggressive students vs. smaller or more passive students
- Older vs. younger students
- NOT mutual combat
What to do if you suspect bullying:
What to do if you suspect bullying:

http://bit.ly/2gHJZh7
Next Steps

If school administration determines there is evidence of bullying, interventions will be put into place to help teach correct behavior, provide support, and restore relationships. Supports may be put in place for multiple parties involved.

Examples of these types of interventions and support may include:

- Peer mediation
- Family/student meetings
- Restorative practices
- Whole-class lessons on correct behavior
- Student reflections
- Peer modeling
- Referral to outside services for individual/group counseling
- In-school consequences
- Reparations for negative behavior
The Goals of our Response

Our purposes in our response to bullying investigations ARE:

- To give students the education and tools they need to be safe, respectful, responsible member of our school communities.
- To train all students in how to respond to aggressive or inappropriate behavior.
- To help teach all students empathy and compassion in their relationships with others to help prevent bullying.
- To work with students and parents to see improved behavior.

Our purposes ARE NOT:

- To alienate, isolate, or label students who have made aggressive choices.
- To move students out of their school or classroom environment.
What Parents Can Do:

- **Report incidents at school**
  - Do not assume teachers/admin know what is going on; ask questions!
  - Your child may not report incidents to his/her classroom teacher. Please send an email and let us know!
  - Ask your child how school is going

- **Provide positive social interactions outside of school:**
  - Build a peer/friend network

- **Model appropriate behavior and language**
  - Talk through potential scenarios
  - “How would you respond if…”
  - Role play

- **Avoid encouraging your child to ignore mean or aggressive behavior**
Case study *(details and names changed slightly)*

The case:

*Three boys (Alejandro, Ben, and Charlie) have been friends since kindergarten when they were in the same class and were part of the same swim team.*

- **In third grade,** a new student, Dan, joined their school. Alejandro, Ben, and Dan all started soccer and would play soccer at recess, making Charlie feel left out. When he tried playing with them, they would tell him he wasn’t part of the “Messi Club” and he felt hurt. At swim practice, the boys dunked him and held his head underwater twice.

- **In fourth grade,** Ben made several comments to Charlie about how he had a single mom and his dad must not love him. Ben also told Alejandro that he wasn’t allowed to invite Charlie to his birthday party because he was a weird kid. Alejandro also made fun of the almond butter sandwiches Charlie brought for lunch. Teachers reminded the boys to be kind and the school social worker brought them in for a 10-week young men’s empowerment group.

- **In fifth grade,** Ben and Alejandro were in the same class and Charlie and Dan were in a second class together. Ben, Alejandro, and Dan continued the “Messi Club” and would allow other boys to join their team for the price of a fidget spinner. Even when he offered a fidget spinner, Charlie was not allowed to join. Yard duties told the boys the “Messi Club” could not be exclusive. Ben told Charlie not to be such a crybaby and that if he told any other adults, Ben would “teach him a lesson” at the park after school. Later in the year, Ben used some foul language in reference to Charlie’s mom.

- **In sixth grade,** Ben punched Charlie in the arm in line twice in the first week of school. Charlie’s mom filed a suspected bullying report against Ben.
Case study *(details and names changed slightly)*

The investigation:

All four students were individually interviewed by school administrators.

- It was determined that there is sufficient evidence of bullying.
  - *Intentionally aggressive behavior* was in the form of friendship withdrawal, exclusion from activities, foul language, threatening, physical aggression, and rude/mean comments.
  - This behavior was repeated over time, as it started in third grade and showed a pattern of continued behaviors through sixth grade.
  - This case involved an imbalance of power because it involved two or three boys who purposefully exhibited this behavior toward one student.

- Ben and Alejandro were determined to be the primary aggressors. Dan was determined to be a participant and Charlie was determined to be the target.
Case study *(details and names changed slightly)*

The outcome:

School administration came up with a Student Intervention Plan for all students involved. Ben and Alejandro’s plans looked similar to the one below.

- **Student will:**
  - Refrain from foul language and threats
  - Use kind and respectful words to all students
  - Respect other students, even if you are playing in another area
  - Not discourage other students from involving adults when there is a problem
  - Refrain from putting hands on other people

- **The school will:**
  - Provide Personal Power for Boys intervention group with the School Social Worker 1x/week for 12 weeks
  - Provide empathy and compassion training for all 6th graders through Reach One Alliance
  - Provide young men’s social skills group through School Resource Officer.
  - Provide students with volunteer staff mentor to meet with 1x/month.
  - Check in with students frequently to monitor this plan.

- **WUSD will:**
  - Provide Suspected Bully Investigation Process training to all school administrators

- **The family will:**
  - Remind students of expected behavior
  - Consider participation in the interventions listed above
  - Communicate with school staff if additional issues arise
  - Have the option to request a change of schedule in the current year
Case study *(details and names changed slightly)*

The outcome:

School administration worked with district officials to come up with a Student Intervention Plan for all students involved. Charlie’s plans looked similar to the one below.

- **Student will:**
  - Have an identified administrator to go to with any additional concerns

- **The school will:**
  - Provide Personal Power for Boys intervention group with the School Social Worker 1x/week for 12 weeks
  - Provide empathy and compassion training for all 6th graders through Reach One Alliance
  - Provide young men’s social skills group through School Resource Officer
  - Provide 30 minute individual sessions 1x/week with the school social worker
  - Work with classroom teachers to identify academic needs that may need to be met
  - Check in with students frequently to monitor this plan

- **WUSD will:**
  - Provide Suspected Bully Investigation Process training to all school administrators

- **The family will:**
  - Consider participating in the interventions listed above
  - Continue to communicate concerns if/when they arise
  - Work with classroom teachers to address academic concerns
“To ignore evil is to become accomplice to it” MLK