

Bullying/Harassment scenarios:

1. Cheryl, Candace, and Alicia are friends and in 7th grade. Cheryl and Alicia live in a trailer park with their families. All three girls ride the school bus home in the afternoon. Amanda and Sarah, both 8th graders, also ride the same bus in the afternoon. During the fall, Amanda and Sarah start repeatedly calling Cheryl and Alicia “White trailer trash” and make fun of their clothes and belongings. One day, Candace, frustrated with the on-going treatment of her friends, shouts at Amanda and Sarah, “Why don’t you two stupid snobs shut up and leave Cheryl and Alicia alone!” Amanda gets up and hits Candace and says, “You shut up! You’re just a stupid 7th grader. Why do you hang out with those two trailer trash idiots anyway?” Several students and the bus driver witness this interaction.
2. Dylan is a 9th grade gay student who is out. Over the summer, one of Dylan’s friends reports to the principal that other students from the high school have created a website that says “Dylan is gay” and includes derogatory comments about Dylan and his “lifestyle.” Dylan’s friend tells the principal that Dylan is now afraid to come back to school in the fall because the website includes threats to physically harm him. The principal goes online and finds the website. While the students who created the website are using screen names, they provide enough information about themselves for the principal to easily identify who the students are.
3. David is standing in line getting food in the high school cafeteria. Two of David’s friends, Seth and Trevor, walk up to David and start giving him a hard time about the pants he is wearing and start calling David a “faggot” and say that David’s pants are “gay.” Two cafeteria staff members, Anna and Carol, who handling the food service overhear Seth and Trevor’s comments towards David.

4. Rebecca Rabinowitz is Jewish and in the 6th grade. In October she missed a few days of school while her family observed Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. When Rebecca returned to school after Yom Kippur she was teased by some of her classmates while walking home from school. Her classmates made comments about how Jews get special treatment at school and about how Jews always have a lot of money. When Rebecca gets home, she is in tears and tells her mother what happened. Mrs. Rabinowitz calls the school immediately and tells Rebecca's homeroom teacher what happened.
5. Edgar is in 4th grade and is much taller and heavier than most of his peers. However, because he has a tremendous sense of humor, he is very popular and well-liked by most of his peers. One day during recess, during a game of dodge ball, Edgar trips on the ball and falls down. Steven, a 5th grader, yells, "Look at the beached whale on the playground!" and Steven and the other 5th graders with him laugh. Edgar turns red but picks himself up and starts to get ready to play again. Several of Edgar's friends get angry and tell Steven and his friends to "shut up." A shouting match ensues until a teacher comes over to break it up.
6. George Washington High School's basketball team traveled to West Coventry High School for a basketball game. The George Washington High School team has three African American players on its team. West Coventry High School has an all White basketball team. At the basketball game, several West Coventry students in the stands start taunting the GWHS Black players during team timeouts and during play. The West Coventry students do not use any overt racial epithets but the taunting clearly refers to the GWHS players' race (e.g., "Come on LeBron, why did you miss that shot?" "Michael Jordan missed a shot, Michael Jordan missed a shot!") Students, parents, and teachers from both schools are sitting in the stands and overhear the remarks of the West Coventry students. The two high schools are in two different school districts.

7. Kendra and Alexander are friends in 2nd grade together. One day during lunch, Alexander says to Kendra, "I know why you like chocolate milk so much!" Kendra asks, "Why?" and Alexander responds, "Because it keeps your skin brown!" Kendra looks at Alexander quizzically and says, "No it doesn't!" Alexander says nothing and the two go on eating their lunch together. The next day Kendra's mother calls the school outraged about what Alexander said to Kendra at lunch the day before.

8. Andrew is a member of the "in" (popular) crowd at Anderson Middle School. During the summer he develops a stress fracture in his left leg and returns to school using crutches. While in the hallway, some of Andrew's friends start teasing him and call him a "gimp" and imitate the way he walks with the crutches. Andrew laughs with his friends and does not seem bothered by the comments. Off to the side, Jered, another student with cerebral palsy who uses crutches all the time, hears the comments and is visibly upset. Jered says nothing to the other boys and keeps walking to class. Mr. Cook, the 8th grade science teacher, and Mr. Peterson, one of the custodial staff, see and overhear the interaction between Andrew and his friends. In addition, Mr. Peterson sees Jered's reaction to the comments.

9. Mohamed, a Jordanian-American student interested in a career in engineering, is involved in a year-long mentoring/internship program where he spends afternoons at a local engineering firm. A couple of workers at the firm refer to him as a "terrorist" and "towel head" throughout the year. In February, Mohamed confides in one of his teachers about the conduct. Mohamed doesn't want to "rock the boat" because he knows that this is one of the best mentoring locations secured by the high school. At the same time, Mohamed has now decided he no longer wants to go into engineering, drops out of college-prep courses, and is despondent at school.

10. Angela is a star track and soccer athlete at Jonestown Central School. She grew up with three brothers and has always been very active in athletics since childhood. Angela has a very short haircut (because she got tired of dealing with washing her long hair everyday after sports when she was younger). She dresses casually, usually in jeans and t-shirts and she never wears dresses or make-up. Angela has many friends, both male and female, and is somewhat popular in school because she is such a good athlete. Nonetheless, while in the hallways at school, Angela sometimes hears comments made by other female students referring to Angela as a "lesbo," "dyke," or "boy" because she has a "butch" haircut and never wears dresses. Angela usually ignored these comments until one day, a cheerleader made a loud comment in the cafeteria about Angela being a "boy" playing on the girls' soccer team. Furious, Angela walked up to the girl, slapped her, and called her a "cross-dressing boy in a skirt with pom-poms."

11. In September, Patricia, a 16 year-old girl in her fifth month of pregnancy, returned to school. She was repeatedly taunted by her classmates about being promiscuous, as well as for her soon-to-be status as an unwed mother. Although she never complained to the school's designated harassment officer, several teachers and staff overheard the comment, but no action was taken to address the remarks. Two months into the school year, she dropped out of school.

12. A group of two or three girls have repeatedly coaxed Joan, a special education student who has a developmental disability, into performing acts that constitute a violation of the school's discipline policy. Realizing that Joan would be unable to comprehend fully or consent to the activity, the girls told her that they would be her friends if she would do as they instructed her. These acts included stealing money from another student's backpack and vandalizing school property.

Process Questions:

1. Is this bullying or harassment or some other form of misconduct? If it is harassment, what is/are the protected category/ies? If you are not sure, what additional information do you need to determine if it might be harassment?
2. What immediate reactive responses are needed to manage or resolve this situation and who needs to be involved? What would you do and/or say? Consider how you would respond to the target, perpetrator, bystanders, parents, and/or school staff.
3. What follow-up steps need to be taken and by whom?