What You Need to Know About Bullying

What is Bullying?

- Bullying is *unwanted, aggressive* behavior that causes significant harm to the target and involves a real or perceived *power imbalance*.

  What Is an Imbalance of Power? Kids who bully use their power – such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity – to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

- Bullying behavior is when it happens repeatedly, or the target has a reasonable fear that it will be repeated.

- Bullying may be based on, but is not limited to, a *specific personal characteristic* such as race, gender, national origin, color, sexual orientation, personal appearance, disability, gender identity or expression, or familial status.

Behaviors That Can Escalate Into Bullying

Verbal	Physical	Social	Electronic
• teasing • name-calling • inappropriate sexual comments • taunting • threatening to cause harm	• hitting • kicking • pushing • pinching • spitting • rude gestures	• purposefully leaving someone out • telling others not to be friends with someone • spreading rumors about someone • embarrassing someone in public	• mean or threatening messages sent through text, email, Facebook or other social media • rumors posted on social networking sites • embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles

It Takes a District: Preventing Bullying in DC

- Support all youth, pay attention to which youth may be at-risk, and always address inappropriate behavior so it does not escalate.

- Provide support to youth who are bullied or who bully others, because both can lead to serious and long-lasting problems.

- All schools, DC youth-serving agencies and non-profit organizations are required to have a bullying prevention policy. Ask to see it, so you can help prevent bullying in your community.