

Kendra started a new school in the seventh grade. During her first week, a group of girls started teasing her. They told her she was fat and ugly and retarded. Then more kids joined in. Now she gets called names every day. People push her in the hallways. They steal her backpack and throw it in the trash. Kendra feels **tormented** by all of these forms of cruel behavior (*example*) and she wants help, but she is embarrassed to tell her parents or her teachers. She feels like everything is her fault.

Bullying is a big problem in schools today. Both boys and girls can be bullies or victims. Punching, teasing, and spreading rumors all **constitute** bullying (*general*). About half of all kids say they have been **intimidated**, or frightened, (*synonym/definition*) at some point during their time in school. Many kids who are bullied have low self-esteem. Some try to avoid school. Some even think about killing themselves.

It is important for schools to create **equity** between all students. No one should be treated like they are less than anyone else. (*general*) Therefore, many people believe that schools should pass rules and **legislate** (*definition/synonym*) an end to bullying.

Some people think schools should teach victims to **resolve** the problem themselves. For example, victims of bullies could make sure they are always with a friend. They could ignore the bullies and walk away. Or they could learn to firmly tell the bullies to stop. (*example*)

Some schools try to solve the problem by focusing on the bullies. But rather than **castigating** them (punishing them for their behavior), (*definition*) they send them to special classes where they can **obtain** help in controlling their anger. In these classes, teachers give students (*definition*) strategies to solve conflicts in a way that doesn't harm themselves or others.

Other schools depend on teachers and administrators to solve the problem. They make sure adults carefully supervise the hallways and the cafeteria, where most bullying happens. Teachers set their rules to make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated. They **intervene** when they see conflicts between students. Breaking up fights between students, meeting with parents of students who have bullied others, and placing bullies in in-school suspension are all examples of interventions that teachers may use. (*examples*)

Is bullying a problem at your school? What do you think is the best way to **terminate**, or put an end to, (*definition/synonym*) this problem?