



“Just Kidding” or Bullying?

A discussion guide for parents and kids

FOR KIDS: Think about these situations...

Someone in math class says, “I can’t believe you don’t know that answer. What are you - stupid?”

You and your friends are making fun of each other at the lunch table and all of you are laughing.

Every day, one of your friends knocks someone’s backpack off as they get on the bus.

You call out, “Hey, shorty! Come sit over here!”

You scream around someone who is bothered by loud noises.

Someone says, “Get out of my way, you idiot!”

You take someone’s lunch box, and throw it across the table as a joke.

Which of the examples do YOU think are *just kidding* and which are *bullying*?

Do you think that some other kids may have a different opinion from you? How can the same words or actions feel like “just kidding” to one person and bullying to another?

Do you think that people with disabilities might get teased and bullied? Is that sometimes for things that they can’t help or control, like how they look or talk or learn? Is that fair? Why or why not?

What if someone’s disability makes it hard for that person to understand the difference between bullying and just kidding? What should we do?

FOR PARENTS:

Here are a few resources so you can help your child understand the fine line between teasing and bullying:

- <http://www.cobbk12.org/bully/MidHighCCSD.pdf>
- <http://www.kidspot.com.au/schoolzone/Friendships-Differences-between-teasing-and-bullying+4032+394+article.htm>
- <http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3752630>
- <http://patch.com/illinois/glenview/bp--is-it-teasing-or-bullying-yes-there-is-a-difference>