

October is Bullying Prevention Month. I know we hear the word BULLY a lot these days and bullying behavior is very serious. Let's start with the definition of Bullying according to [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov).

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- 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.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Our goal at Central School is to be preventive and stop bullying before it starts. Students are taught three very important steps to deal with peer problems at school. STOP, WALK and TALK is introduced and reviewed regularly by staff. Students are empowered to tell a student who is doing something they do not like to PLEASE STOP. If that does not work they are told to WALK AWAY and if they still need help they are told to TALK to an adult about what is going on so that the adult can intervene. Students are told and examples are given of times when talking to an adult is always the best choice.

Children are learning how to navigate the social world around them and sometimes kids make mistakes and say or do something that is not nice. Saying something unkind or even hitting, while inappropriate, does not mean a child is a bully. If this behavior is repeated and the intent is to intimidate or threaten another child this rises to the level of bullying and will be addressed as such. Other inappropriate behaviors that do not rise to the level of bullying, will also be addressed and handled appropriately.

If you have concerns for your child please never hesitate to contact your child's teacher, school social worker or principal. We strive to create a safe and respectful learning environment for all students at Central School!