

Bullying is defined in the Education Act, and that definition changed in 2012. The definition in the Education Act is the definition that will be used by all schools in the WRDSB. The definition is as follows:

“bullying” means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where,

(a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of,

(i) causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual’s reputation or harm to the individual’s property,

or

(ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and

(b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education.

The “behaviour” referred to in the definition above is specified in the Education Act as follows:

For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” in subsection (1), behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means.

We often hear talk of “cyber-bullying” in the media these days. The Education Act now specifically addresses “cyber-bullying” in the following way:

For the purposes of the definition of “bullying” in subsection (1), bullying includes bullying by electronic means (commonly known as cyber-bullying), including,

(a) creating a web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;

(b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and

(c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.