

What Should You Do?

Educator Guide

Elementary School Students: How should you handle these bullying situations?

Overview: An activity designed with hypothetical bullying scenarios (based on real events) that students can use to think through responses and solutions.

Goal: Students are presented with videos and written descriptions of bullying scenarios and guided through response options. The objective is not to find the right or wrong answer, but rather to have meaningful reflection and discussion about how to handle difficult social situations that many students experience.

Steps to use:

Step one: Provide everyone with “Student Handout”

Step Two: Video scenarios

- Invite students to watch the Season One, Video 29 **“What Should You Do?”- Inclusion** video from the PACERTalks About Bullying video series
- Instruct students to pause at each of the “options” in the video (the visual cue to pause these prompts is the orange block of text that appears on the left side of the screen) and think about how it would impact the people involved
- Have students respond to the questions on their “Student Handout” under each option
- Once they have recorded their response, review and discuss the example student responses
- After watching the video, ask students to decide which of the options best aligns with how they would respond to the situation

Scenario summary: *Imagine this: in the middle of the school year, a new student named John joins your class. After a few days it's obvious your classmates aren't being very nice to him. One day during group activities, you see that John is being left out on purpose. One student is even going up to your other classmates to say, “Hey, don't let John join your group.” This really bothers you and you want to invite John to join your group, but you're worried that other classmates may exclude you as well. What should you do?*

- Option 1 @ 1:10 in video:** Decide it's not your problem and do nothing — John will be OK
- Option 2 @ 1:40 in video:** Talk privately with your teacher and explain how John is being left out on purpose
- Option 3 @ 2:25 in video:** Decide that even though it bothers you, it's just easier to go along with everyone else. You tell others not to let John join their group.
- Option 4 @ 3:32 in video:** Even though some kids might make fun of you or try to leave John out, invite John to be in your group

Step Three: Written scenarios

- After watching the video, encourage students to then read scenarios one and two
- Ask them to decide how they should respond, say a little bit about why they would choose that response, and think about the impact that response would have on those involved

Scenario one: Being cyberbullied

Scenario summary: *You are playing your favorite computer game and get a message from someone you go to school with but is not your friend. The message says, “Seriously, what makes you think you should on this game, why do you even bother playing?” You’re not sure if the person is joking or sent the message to the wrong person, so you don’t say anything back and sign off. When you’re playing the game the next day, the same person sends you another message saying, “You’re the worst player. You should delete your account.”*

a. Which option would you choose?

- Option 1:** Ignore the messages and hope that it stops
- Option 2:** Respond to the message by saying, “You’re the one no one wants to play with. You’d better back off or else.”
- Option 3:** Try to avoid the person at school
- Option 4:** Block the person. Talk with your parents or a trusted adult to get their advice about how to handle the situation
- Option 5:** Other—please include additional ideas about how to respond

b. Share why you would choose that option. Include how it would make you feel.

Educator notes to share with students

If you ever receive mean messages online, block that person on your account privacy settings. Then, talk with your parents or an adult you trust right away. You don’t have to go through this on your own. It’s not your fault when someone is bullying you, and you have the right to feel safe and have fun online. Document what was said by taking a screen shot and showing it to your parents. When you talk to your parents, work together to identify how to address the problem so that it doesn’t happen again. You and your parents can also let your school know about the bullying and they can help address the issue as well. If someone is being mean, we sometimes feel like ignoring or avoiding the problem or doing something mean in retaliation. Although these options might make you feel better at first, they usually don’t solve the problem and can make matters worse. If you do nothing, it’s likely that the other person will continue to bully you. It’s always best to directly address the problem. If you try to ignore it, you’ll soon see how hard it is to avoid a kid who goes to school with you or is always online. If the kid who is bullying you realizes you are avoiding them, it can give them a greater sense of power over you and make the bullying worse. If you respond back with mean messages, it can cause more harm. It also makes it more difficult to resolve the conflict and define consequences since now both people are being hurtful. If you’re upset, sad, or angry, give yourself some time to think through how to respond so you don’t do something that you can’t take back. Remember that what you put online can be saved and shared by others.

Scenario two: Witnessing cyberbullying

Scenario summary: You and your friends are online in a group chat about a show that you all really like. Another kid from your school, who you are not close with, was also invited to join. Your friends start sending mean comments to the other kid and it makes you feel bad. You like your friends, but you also don't want to see them being mean to others.

a. Which option would you choose?

- Option 1:** Ignore the mean comments. Your friends will probably stop soon.
- Option 2:** You really like your friends, so you reply to the mean comments saying, “Haha, LOL!”
- Option 3:** Send the kid being hurt a kind, private message.
- Option 4:** If you are comfortable with it, reply to your friends’ comments saying, “I think [the person] knows a lot about the show and has great things to say.”
- Option 5:** Other—please include additional ideas about how to respond.

b. Share why you would choose that option and include how it would make you and your friend feel.

Educator notes to share with students

When we witness bullying, we all make a decision. Some of the options include:

1. Join in
2. Ignore it
3. Help the person being bullied
4. Address the behavior of the person(s) bullying or encourage them to think about their actions

Sometimes it's hard to stand up to friends or other kids who are being mean. It can be easy to say something mean to the person being bullied to fit in, but that makes you part of the problem, too.

You can send the kid being bullied a kind message, let them know you don't agree with what's happening, and ask how you can help. Receiving one nice message among many mean ones can make a huge difference.

You can tell your friends that it's not cool to say mean or untrue things online. That sends the message that you don't agree with their behavior, and your friends might change their actions as a result. If you ignore the mean comments and don't tell your friends that what they are doing is wrong, the behavior will most likely continue. If your “friends” say anything mean to you back after you stand up for something you believe in, then they are not real friends. Real friends support you and what is important to you.