

Personal Space, Mean Moments, and Bullying

How to Define These Three Behaviors for You and Your Child

Personal Space

- **Many** arguments and conflict arise when personal space is being invaded
- Many students will come home and say, “Johnny pushed me” – when parents investigate this further, they realize that it is **not** a bullying issue, but a personal space issue.
- For instance, many students will “push” or cram through the doors to be the first one out to the bus – this “pops” students’ bubbles and they don’t like it.
- During guidance, the counselor talks to students about personal space being like a hula hoop around our bodies – when we step inside someone’s hula hoop without their permission we can either make them feel **uncomfortable** or be **annoying**.
- The counselor also talks to the students about how our words **and** actions can invade someone’s hula hoop.
- Also, during guidance the idea of “asking someone to come into their hula hoop” arises – we talk about hugs. Many students want to hug other students and adults. Most of the time this is okay, but in guidance the example is given of students who may not be comfortable being touched.

Mean moments

- Many students will say, “Johnny is bullying me” to their parents, teachers, and counselor.
- Here at Cheat Lake Elementary we spend a lot of time defining bullying versus mean moments
- Mean moments and bullying **look the same** but the difference is **how many times they happen**
- During guidance, the students are taught that mean moments happen **ONE** time and then it **STOPS** – we even use hand signals by showing our “1” finger and making a STOP sign with the palm of our hand
- Example: There are times that a student (student A) is mean being to another student (student B), but after one time it stops. Then someone else (student C) is being mean to student B. This is still considered a mean moment that happened twice to the same student. It is not bullying because on two separate occasions, two different students were only being mean once and then that behavior stops

Bullying

- Bullying and Mean Moments **look the same** – pushing, shoving, kicking, name-calling, mean teasing, excluding others, tripping, rumors, etc. When these behaviors **happen once** they are considered **mean moments**

- During guidance, students learn that bullying happens **many, many, many times**. We talk about one student picking on another student many times or one student bothering several students many times. We use the hand signal similar to “the wheels on the bus go round and round” to help the kids learn that bullying happens many times
- Teasing – laughing **with** someone vs. **at** someone
 - At school, kids are taught the difference between laughing at someone and laughing with someone. During guidance, this concept is really emphasized. Laughing **with someone** means that both people are laughing and having a good time (good teasing/humor/etc.). Laughing **at someone** is when one person finds something funny and the other person does not (maybe they are hurt, sad, mad, etc.). This is considered mean teasing and can be seen as a mean moment. If this behavior of **laughing at someone** continues many times, it could turn into bullying