

## Teasing vs. Taunting

### “Teasing VS. Taunting”

Many times a bully will say they were only teasing or just joking. Following are some thoughts about teasing and taunting (bullying) that can be used as a reference.

#### TEASING

*Teasing* is a fun thing you do with friends –with people you care about. Both give and take equally.

- Allows the teaser and person teased to swap roles with ease.
- Isn't intended to hurt the other person.
- Maintains the basic dignity of everyone involved.
- Pokes fun in lighthearted, clever and harmless way.
- Is meant to get both parties to laugh.
- Is only a small part of the activities shared by kids who have something in common.
- Is innocent in motive.
- Is stopped when person teased becomes upset or objects to the teasing.

#### TAUNTING

*Taunting* is a choice to bully someone for whom you have contempt. There is no intent of playfulness, even if the bully says, I was just teasing, or joking. Taunting is intended to isolate the target, to hurt, and words used are demeaning and cruel. The bully may laugh, and so may the bystander(s). The target is embarrassed, humiliated, or shamed, living in fear of what may come next.

- Is based on an imbalance of power and is one – sided; the bully taunts (ridicules, uses sarcasm, etc.)
- Is intended to harm.
- Involves humiliating, cruel, demeaning, or bigoted language thinly disguised as jokes.
- Includes laughter directed at the target, not with the target.
- Induces fear of further taunting or can be a prelude to physical bullying.
- Is sinister in motive.
- Continues especially when target becomes distressed or objects to the taunt.

*Taken from Barbara Coloroso's book, "The Bully, The Bullied, and The Bystander".*

At times a friend may say something that is hurtful to another friend. When it is pointed out that the teasing is hurting feelings or causing discomfort the friend will promptly stop. Ask your child if the person who said something hurtful is *usually* a friend. If the answer is yes, encourage your child to speak with their friend about the hurtful remark that was made. Many times children need help finding the words to use. Model some examples for your child to say, such as:

“I do not like it when you tease me about \_\_\_\_\_ please stop.” Or “Remember yesterday when you said \_\_\_\_\_ in front of everyone else, it really hurt my feelings please don’t do that again.”

If your child has tried to talk to their friend and the behavior continues or when you ask your child if the person is *usually* a friend, and the answer is no, then encourage your child to report the taunting to an adult at school. As the parent or guardian, please refer to the list below to contact the appropriate person if there is a concern that bullying is occurring.

**Guilford** – Keren Seiler, DASA Representative, Linda Maynard, Principal, and/or your child’s classroom teacher

**Greenlawn** – Phylcia Dunham-Fleming, DASA Representative, Jennifer Henderson, Principal, and/or your child’s classroom teacher

**Jr. – Sr. High School** – Joanne Moxley, DASA Coordinator, Willian Zakrajsek, Principal, Scott Graham, Assistant Principal

The Bainbridge-Guilford School District is working hard to reduce instances of bullying or harassment in our schools. Parents are a vital part in helping to make our school a safe and enjoyable place for all. Please feel free to contact the above, or a counselor in any building if you have concerns.