

## **SCHOOL**

### **Creating a safe learning environment**

#### **Is bullying a crime?**

Bullying, even without violence, is harassment and is illegal and you have a right to seek help. The people bullying you can get into trouble with the law. An adult in a position of authority would be in a better position to let the bullies know just how serious this offence is. If the adult you tell doesn't take your complaints seriously, find another adult who will.

#### **If I bully someone can the police arrest me or can I only get in trouble with the school?**

The police can arrest you depending on the type of bullying you do. If you are physically harming and harassing another student, you could be arrested. You may also get in a lot of trouble with the administration of the school-- you can be suspended, expelled, or arrested, depending on the situation.

#### **What if I wasn't the only one bullying? Can the whole class get in trouble?**

The whole class can get in trouble for bullying. Just because everyone else is doing it doesn't make it right and doesn't take away any of the blame from you. Multiple people have been charged together for bullying the same person. Bullying is illegal no matter how commonplace it may seem.

#### **Can someone who watches someone else bully get in trouble for not doing anything?**

Not necessarily. In some instances, you may see bullying take place and not be in trouble for not doing anything. The right thing to do would be to notify an adult. In certain cases, by watching bullying take place, you could be committing an offence.

#### **When can teachers search my stuff?**

Depending on your school's code of conduct (which you agreed to when you attend school), searching students' property may be allowed in certain cases; your rights to privacy in school are very restricted especially if they think that someone is in danger. Police can also come onto school premises to search your stuff but they have stricter rules to follow.

#### **When can the school suspend or expel me? Can I do anything to defend myself?**

The school can suspend or expel you if you violate their code of conduct. You can defend yourself by showing that you were acting in accordance with the code or that the terms of the code of conduct are unreasonable. In some cases, if you think that you are being wrongly treated then you can have your parents contact a lawyer.

### **Is hanging out on school grounds outside of school hours considered loitering?**

There is no law against hanging out on school grounds outside of school hours. However, there are laws against loitering, which is the act of remaining in a particular public place for a long period of time. Loitering can be illegal in certain circumstances; you don't have to be doing anything wrong, hanging out on public property without a purpose can be illegal. If the police arrive, they will probably ask you to leave. If you refuse, they might arrest you.

### **What happens if I pull the fire alarm when I know that there is no fire?**

It is illegal to falsely pull a fire alarm; you could be arrested and have to pay fines to the fire department.

### **If I damage school property will I have to pay? What if I damage someone else's property at school?**

If you damage school property, you and/or your parents will have to pay the cost to repair or replace it. The same applies should you damage someone else's property at school. If the police get wind of it, you could be charged with criminal mischief.

### **If I tell my teacher something confidential are they allowed to tell anyone?**

If you tell your teacher something confidential, they will want to make sure you are safe. So they might have to do something to stop any harm that may arise from what you tell them. Under the law, teachers have to keep what you tell them confidential EXCEPT if they believe there is a serious risk to your own or someone else's safety, otherwise your teacher should keep the information confidential.

### **Is my teacher allowed to insult me in front of the whole class? Embarrass or Punish me?**

Your teacher is not allowed to insult you at all. Teachers don't have a right to belittle you, they can discourage behaviour and frown upon your actions but they can only criticize your actions, not you. If they insult, embarrass or punish you in front of the class, report them to the principal.

Your teacher is not allowed to punish you by using physical force but they can use physical force in order to get you to comply with their instructions. For example, they can grab you and force you out of a classroom if you refuse to leave the classroom on your own but they can't hit you to punish you for not leaving the classroom after they have requested it.