

# VIOLENCE AND BULLYING BETWEEN STUDENTS



## Understanding Students' Rights and the Role of School Staff

**Right to respect and dignity:** Every student has the right to be treated with respect, without humiliation, teasing, or damage to their reputation.

! For example: making fun of someone because of their appearance, weight, or clothing violates their **right to dignity**.

**Freedom of expression:** Every student can share their opinions, preferences, or ideas, as long as they respect others.

! For example: mocking or dismissing someone's opinions or ideas in class violates their **freedom of expression**.

**In Quebec, all students have the same fundamental rights and freedoms.**

These rights apply everywhere: at school, on the school bus or other public transport, during school activities, outside of school, and online.

Having rights also comes with responsibilities. Every student has the responsibility to **respect the rights of others through their words, actions, and behaviour.**

**Right to security:** Every student has the right to feel safe physically and psychologically. This means being protected from violence or any form of harassment.

! For example: hitting, pushing, or threatening others violates their **right to security**.

**Right to equality and inclusion:** Every student has the right to be treated fairly, without discrimination based on gender, origin, religion, orientation, or abilities.

! For example: excluding someone from activities or games because of their abilities, origin, or religion violates their **right to equality and inclusion**.

**Violence** is any deliberate action expressed through words, behaviours, or writing that harms another person. It can be physical, psychological, or sexual. Violence can hurt, scare or intimidate someone, and it can violate their rights, damage their property, or harm their well-being.



**Bullying** is behaviour, words, or actions that are repeated over time, whether on purpose or not, and that target a person directly or indirectly. Bullying can happen online as well. Bullying happens when there is an imbalance of power (physical strength, popularity, age, status, number of people involved, etc.).



**Students can be held responsible for their actions.** Some behaviours toward other students may go beyond school and lead to legal consequences. Depending on how serious or repeated the behaviour is, consequences can include: a written warning, a meeting with parents, removal from class, suspension, an intervention plan, a report to authorities, etc.

### The role of school staff in cases of violence or bullying

#### INTERVENE

- Immediately stop any situation of violence or bullying.
- Ensure students' safety (separate students, secure the area, ask for support).
- Document the facts (date, location, exact words, screenshots).
- Apply the school's anti-bullying and anti-violence plan.

#### SUPPORT

- Listen without judging.
- Show the student that they are being taken seriously.
- Offer the student the option of having a friend present for support while explaining what happened.
- Inform the appropriate staff members according to school procedures.

#### PREVENT

- Talk about bullying and violence in class and their consequences on students.
- Remind students that school staff are there to help and that they should not hesitate to ask for help.
- Mention that actions may lead to school consequences (suspension, removal from class, intervention plan) and sometimes police involvement.