

# Teasing

At all ages, students rated teasing as the most frequent bullying behavior. There are some conflicting attitudes regarding teasing because teasing is an ambiguous term. Some view it as caustic harassment and others as playfulness. It is viewed as bullying when a student higher on the schoolyard food chain or pecking order mocks a student on the lower end of the pecking order. It is viewed as playfulness if the students represent the same social level or popularity.

Hoover & Oliver examine teasing and state that if the intent is to hurt, annoy, or upset someone, it is not teasing but bullying. They created the following chart.

## Teasing Do's!

1. Be careful when you tease others and accept teasing if you tease.
2. Use words gently and carefully with friends who know your type of humor.
3. Ask whether the teasing was hurtful. Tell them that you were teasing.
4. Tell others if teasing hurts your feelings and that you do not like it.
5. Differentiate between friendly teasing and hurtful harassment.
6. Read body language to see if feelings hurt. Ask them if you are confused.
7. Help others if they are being ridiculed by teasing.

## Teasing Don'ts

1. Tease someone with whom you do not associate.
2. Tease the opposite gender about sex.
3. Tease about a person's body shape, size, weight or appearance.
4. Tease about a person's family members.
5. Tease about a topic if a person has asked you to stop or if the person is upset.
6. Be too sensitive if you are being teased in a friendly way.
7. Hide your feelings about being teased; instead, tell them how you feel.



Jeff Dess differentiates when teasing is acceptable or not. Teasing is acceptable when it is

- a. used as a way of fitting in or conversing with friends;
- b. equally shared among all involved;
- c. stopped when the person has been asked to stop; and
- d. someone with whom you have a close relationship.

Teasing, however, is not acceptable when it is

- a. repeated over and over again; and
- b. taken too far resulting in a physical altercation.