Understanding Conflict vs. Bullying
Conflicts can be Resolved, Bullying has to be Reported!

Conflict is different than bullying. Not all disagreements and fights are bullying. Conflict is a normal part of human interaction and arises frequently in our day to day lives. Part of learning to be independent and grown up is learning how to deal with and respond appropriately to conflict at home, at school, and in your community. Recognizing the difference between conflict and bullying will help students, parents and teachers know how to respond.

Conflict is:

- All parties have equal power to solve the problem
- All parties have an equal interest in the outcome
- All parties are of relatively equal size, age or status
- A conflict can be resolved by talking or working things out together or with help from an adult.

Bullying is:

- A repeated form of mistreatment where the victim cannot defend him/herself
- An imbalance of power – usually one person is either bigger or older than the other or has a higher social standing (is more popular) and uses this against the other person
- Usually involves repeated acts of harassment, harm or humiliation

Differences in Addressing Conflict and Bullying

Conflict is an important part of growing up but bullying is not. Conflict teaches kids how to give and take, how to come to an agreement and how to solve problems. But bullying only wounds kids.

When it comes to conflict, it's good for kids to learn conflict resolution and resiliency skills. These skills promote listening and working together to come to an agreement or plan to move forward.

Conflict resolution works based on the assumption that both people are in part responsible for the current problem and need to work it out. In this situation, both kids make compromises and the conflict is resolved.

When bullying occurs, the bully is fully responsible for the situation. And the bully bears all the responsibility for change. For instance, bullies need to be told that their behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. They also need to experience consequences for their behavior. Likewise, targets of bullying need to be reassured that they didn't

cause the bullying, they did the right thing by reporting and that they are not to blame. They also should receive interventions that will help them overcome the negative impact of bullying so they can build self-confidence and resiliency.

Resources include:

www.a4kclub.org

www.netsmartz.org