



What is bullying?

Bullying, also known as intimidation, is repeated behaviour that is intended to cause fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress or other forms of harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, reputation or property: Bullying can be direct or indirect and can take place by physical, verbal or written means, by means of physical or electronic images or by any other form of expression.¹ Intimidation is an offence under section 423 of the *Criminal Code*.

The following is an example of bullying:

Steve and Keven own a trailer located in a campground. For the past several years, they have been at odds with Fabrice, the owner of the neighbouring trailer. Steve and Keven complain about Fabrice's behaviour, which they consider to be inappropriate, and decide to seek revenge in several ways:

- They put dish soap in the gas tank of Fabrice's lawn mower;
- They tell Fabrice that they will flood his trailer with his water hose;
- They persistently follow Fabrice throughout the campground;
- They watch him in his trailer with binoculars, etc.

Fabrice feels intimidated by Steve and Keven's behaviour and decides to file a complaint with the police. Under the law, Fabrice's fear must be evaluated from the point of view of a reasonable person placed in the same circumstances.

Bullying can also take place via any technological means, such as in the following examples:

- A student decides to bombard a classmate's Facebook page with violent messages and photographs.
- A fan is disappointed by a popular singer's performance and sends him hateful and threatening messages on his Instagram account.
- A son constantly calls his mother to ask for money and tells her that if she doesn't give him money, he will damage her house.
- A lovestruck teenager repeatedly sends his ex-girlfriend text messages and tells her he won't stop until she comes to see him.

It's important to be very careful when sending messages via text, Messenger or any other technological means, because the content of the message may constitute intimidation under the *Criminal Code*.

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* The information set out in this document is not a legal interpretation.

The masculine is used to designate persons solely in order to simplify the text.

¹ [A.B. v. Bragg Communications Inc.](#), [2012] 1 SCR 567, [para.21](#)